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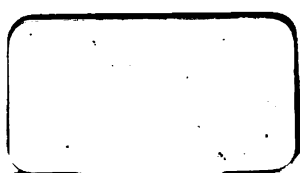
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IN  
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**MR. ALFRED SEARCY IN TROPICAL GARB.**

# IN NORTHERN SEAS.



**Being Mr. Alfred Searcy's Experiences on the North  
Coast of Australia, as recounted to  
E. Whittington.**



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## PREFACE.

Nearly 25 years ago a little canvas boat was anchored off the Semaphore beach. Whenever I had the chance I used to run down to the seashore, wade out to the craft, climb into her, and then, sitting in the stern, would let my feet dangle in the water, and by the movement of my legs propel the cockleshell within the length of her own anchor rope. Mr. Alfred Searcy was the owner of this little boat, and I always admired the way he handled the dingey in a gale of wind. In those days I pictured him as the hero of numerous seagoing stories, and tales of adventures. About this time Mr. Searcy proceeded to the Northern Territory as Sub-collector of Customs. He was stationed at Port Darwin for 14 years, and during that period he had many novel and exciting experiences. In the articles that follow, Mr. Searcy, who is now assistant clerk of the House of Assembly (at the time they were written he was acting clerk), tells, in the form of interviews, of his eventful career as Sub-collector of Customs, of hard work, of his adventures by land and sea, of "moving accidents," and "hairbreadth 'scapes." The idea at first was to only write something about the history of the Malay proas and the trepang fishing industry, but the Premier of the State and the Minister Controlling the Northern Territory (the Hon. J. G. Jenkins), in speaking on a motion submitted by Mr. C. E. Herbert, the senior member for the Territory, for the better development of the great district he represented, made the most enthusiastic, glowing, and stirring speech of the session. This aroused interest in South Australia's northern dependency. Again, in moving the second reading of the Tropical Products Bill, which has for its object the encouragement of cottongrowing in the Northern Territory, Mr. Jenkins was at his best. I dropped down from the reporting gallery one night, and, in the course of a smoke and a chat with Mr. Searcy, it was decided to continue the narratives. With the completion of the Transcontinental Railway line and the development of the vast resources of the Northern Territory in the way of tropical agriculture, pastoral and mineral industries, the dependency should be converted from a "white elephant" into one of the gardens of the world. Of course suitable labour is an essential, and this fact has been proclaimed by such authorities as Dr. Holtze (the Curator of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens), who for about fifteen years was in charge of the Botanic and Experimental Garden at Port Darwin, Senator Playford, and quite recently by Mr. Bottomley. The map showing the proximity of Port Darwin to the markets of the world, and the bibliography of the Northern Territory by Mr. T. Gill,

I.S.O., published as an appendix, are interesting features of the publication. As to the articles themselves, I cannot do better than quote the following letter Mr. Searcy received from Mr. C. E. Herbert, M.P.:—"My dear Mr. Searcy—Allow me to thank you for the great pleasure afforded me of perusing your chatty, instructive, and interesting contributions to *The Register* relating your experiences in the Northern Territory, entitled 'In Northern Seas.' The publication of articles like yours, particularly when they are written by men having a long experience of the country such as you possess, does far more to reach and fix the attention, and thereby to enlighten and remove the ignorance and prejudice of the many in regard to that vast and rich dependency of this State, than can be effected by official reports and statistics, which are, necessarily perhaps, condensed, stilted, and to the multitude uninteresting. In addition to its instructive character, your contribution will in years to come, when Port Darwin has taken its proper place as the 'hub' of a thriving and prosperous tropical State of the Commonwealth, form not the least interesting of the records of the early history of the country.—Yours truly, Charles E. Herbert." Thanks are especially due to the Premier (Hon. J. G. Jenkins) for the interest he has taken in the reprinting of these articles.—E. W., Register Office, January 31, 1905.

P.S.—Since the above was written Mr. Herbert has been appointed Government Resident and Judge of the Northern Territory, in succession to Mr. Justice Dashwood.

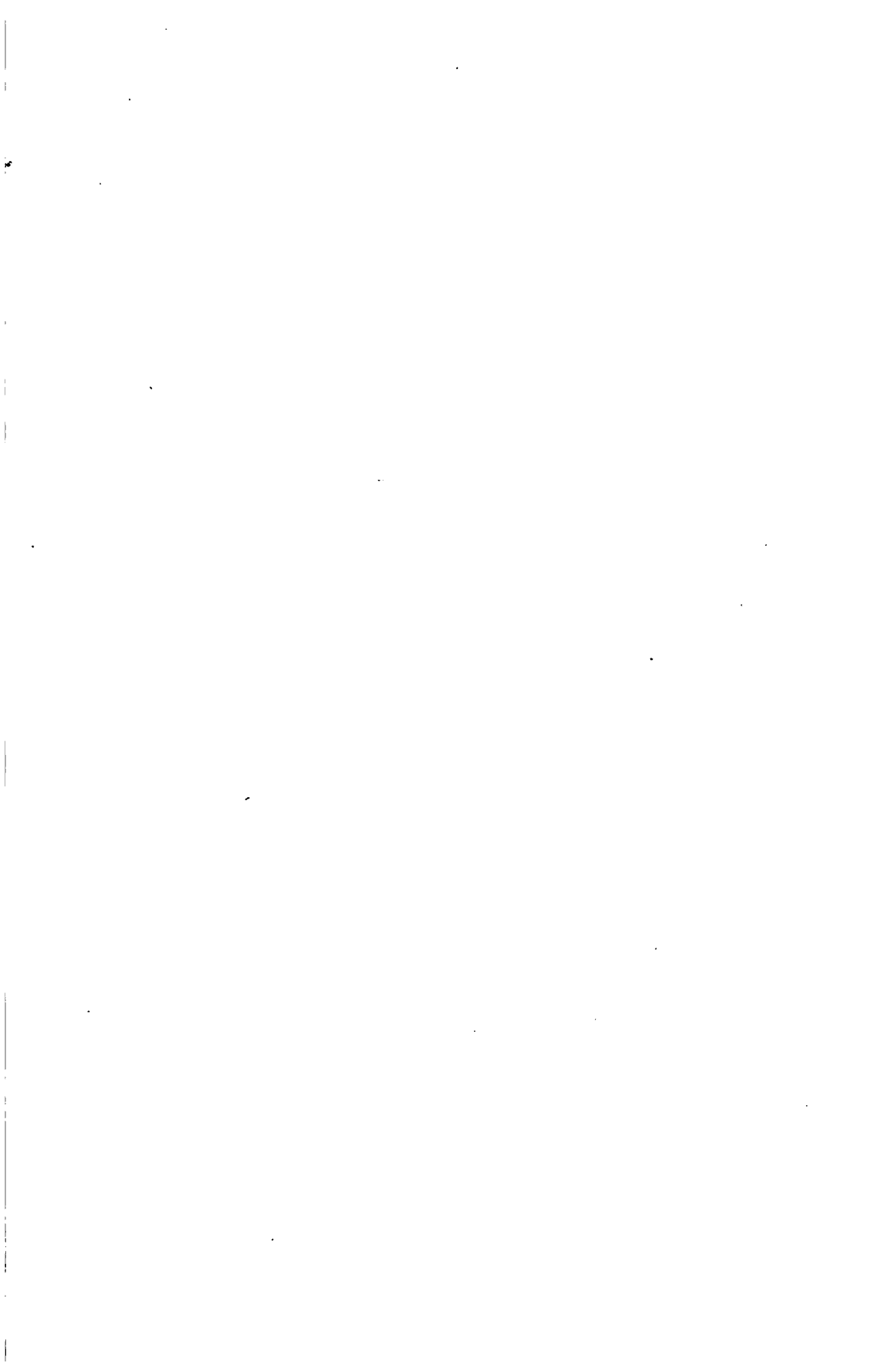
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At the request of Mr. Searcy, and with much pleasure, I add a few words to supplement the prefatory notes which are printed above. As one who has travelled in and written upon that wonderful settlement of rich resources—the Northern Territory of South Australia—I can testify without reservation to the strict accuracy with which Mr. Searcy has described the natural scenery and the fauna that he presents so vividly to the view of the reader. In no particular has he exaggerated the attractions of the remarkable and romantic country. The Northern Territory possesses many claims to be characterized as a sportsman's paradise, as well as—on account of its potentialities for commercial production—a land flowing with milk and honey.

WILL J. SOWDEN,

Editor of *The Register*.

Adelaide (South Australia), February 3, 1905,





THE PREMIER OF THE STATE AND MINISTER CONTROLLING THE NORTHERN  
TERRITORY (HON. J. G. JENKINS).

# IN NORTHERN SEAS.



## MALAY PROAS.

### INTERESTING HISTORY.

#### No. I.

The Malays who man the proas which sail down from Macassar to Port Bowen, in the Northern Territory, are suspected by officers of the Customs Department of smuggling, and it was recently suggested that some of their number also obtained admission to Australia despite the Immigration Restriction Act. After considering these representations, the Minister for Customs determined to close Port Bowen as a reporting station from January 1, and make oversea Asiatics who wish to engage in the trepang industry go to Port Darwin. It is believed that the trade winds will not enable proas to go to Port Darwin, and therefore they will in all probability be prevented from visiting Northern Australia.

That telegram, which was published in The Register on September 9, 1904, was read and reread with intense interest by Mr. Alfred Searcy, acting clerk of the House of Assembly. It took him back over a score of years to the days when he was Sub-Collector of Customs in the Northern Territory, and used to go proa hunting. Mr. Searcy has had the experiences of a Louis Becke, and nothing is more delightful than to listen to him tell in graphic fashion of exciting incidents connected with wild life in our northern seas. It is all like a wonderful romance. Mr. Searcy told me of his several cruises after the men from Macassar—two in the Flying Cloud to Port Essington and Copeland Island, Mount Norris Bay; one in the Fleetwing to Melville Bay, entrance to the Gulf of Carpentaria; one in the Victoria to Port Essington; one in the Palmerston, and another in the Active, down the McArthur River, at the bottom of the Gulf of Carpentaria; and one in the Adelaide westward to the border of Western Australia—and I asked him to make out some notes and lend me his diaries, so that I could give the history of the Malay proas on our coast.

#### —An Irresistible Calling.—

Mr. Searcy spent one evening in acceding to my request, and when he handed me over the papers in the morning he said—"Going over these trips has awakened a great longing in me, and I feel I want to get back to the old life." How well Rudyard Kipling expresses the same sentiment with reference to the East in those well-

known words—"If you've 'eard the East a-callin', you won't never 'eed naught else." I remember several years ago spending an evening in Adelaide with Louis Becke, and he said very much the same thing. With him the romantic South Seas were calling, and he did not believe he would be able to resist the call. Volume on volume could be written on Mr. Searcy's exciting experiences on the north coast, but these articles are intended to deal more particularly with the question of the Malay proas.

#### —The Place of Call.—

Just over 20 years ago Mr. Searcy went along the coast, made seizures and levied fines, and arranged that the proas should report at Oojountambanoonoo, in Bowen Straits, instead of Port Essington.

#### —Discovery of the Proas.—

The Government Resident (the late Hon. J. L. Parsons), in his report in 1885, said, *inter alia*:—"It has been well known to those who are acquainted with the history of the eastern archipelago and of Northern Australia that for a long period—probably centuries—the islanders have been in the habit of annually visiting the northern coast of Australia, and carrying away the spoils of its beaches and shallow waters to Macassar. So long as this portion of the globe was waste and might was the sole law it is difficult to see any reason why the Malay should not gather the annual harvest and turn it to his own profitable account." The Macassar proas were discovered on February 17, 1803, in the "Malay Road," south of Cotton Islands (English Company's Islands), by Capt. Flinders; and on March 27, 1884, when on a cruise in search of proas which had failed to procure the necessary licences, Mr. Searcy anchored in almost the identical place where Flinders first sighted them in February, 1803, 81 years before.

#### —Flinders Sights a Strange Boat.—

The following extracts from Capt. Flinders's "Voyage to Terra Australis," published in 1814, will prove extremely interesting at the present time:—"Thursday,

February 17, 1803. After clearing the narrow passage between Cape Wilberforce and Bromby Isles, we followed the main coast to the south-west, having on the starboard hand some high and large islands, which closed in towards the coast ahead so as to make it doubtful whether there were any passage between them. Under the nearest island was perceived a canoe full of men, and in a sort of roadstead at the south end of the same island there were six vessels covered over like hulks, as if laid up for the bad season. Our conjectures were various as to who the people could be, and what their business here; but we had little doubt of their being the same whose traces had been found so abundantly in the gulf. I had inclined to the opinion that these traces had been left by Chinese, and the report of the natives in Caledon Bay that they had firearms strengthened the supposition; and combining this with the appearance of the vessels, I set them down for piratical ladores who secreted themselves here from pursuit and issued out as the season permitted or prey invited them. Impressed with this idea, we tacked to work up for the road, and our pendant and ensign being hoisted each of them hung out a small white flag. On approaching I sent Lieut. Flinders in an armed boat to learn who they were; and soon afterwards we came to an anchor in 12 fathoms, within musket shot, having a spring on the cable and all hands at quarters.

#### —Proas from Macassar.—

"On the return of Lieut. Flinders we learned that they were proas from Macassar, and the six Malay commanders shortly afterwards came on board in a canoe. It happened fortunately that my cook was a Malay, and through this means I was able to communicate with them. The chief of the six proas was a short elderly man named Pobassoo; he said there were upon the coast in different divisions 60 proas, and that Salloo was the commander-in-chief. These people were Mahometans, and on looking in the launch expressed great horror to see hogs there. Nevertheless they had no objection to port wine, and even requested a bottle to carry away with them at sunset. In the morning (Friday, 18th) I went on board Pobassoo's vessel, with two of the gentlemen and my interpreter to make further inquiries, and afterwards the six chiefs came to the Investigator, and several canoes were alongside for the purpose of barter. Before noon five other proas steered into the road from the south-west, anchoring near the former six, and we had more people about the ship than I chose to admit on board, for each of them wore a short dagger or cress by his side. My people were under arms, and the guns were exercised and a shot fired at the request of the chiefs. In the evening they all retired quietly, but our guns were kept ready and half the people at quarters all night. At daylight the proas got under sail and steer-

ed through the narrow passage between Cape Wilberforce and Bromby's Isles, by which we had come, and afterwards directed their course south-eastwards into the Gulf of Carpentaria.

#### —The Fleet.—

"According to Pobassoo, from whom my information was principally obtained, 60 proas, belonging to the Rajah of Boni, and carrying 1,000 men, had left Macassar with the north-west monsoon two months before upon an expedition to this coast, and the fleet was then lying in different places to the westward five or six together, Pobassoo's division being the foremost. These proas seemed to be about 25 tons, and to have 20 or 25 men in each. That of Pobassoo carried two small brass guns obtained from the Dutch, but the others had only muskets, besides which every Malay wears a cress or dagger either secretly or openly.

#### —Trepang.—

"The object of their expedition was a certain animal called 'trepang.' Of this they gave me two dried specimens, and it proved to be the *beche-de-mer* or sea-cucumber. They get the trepang by diving in three to eight fathoms of water, and where it is abundant a man will bring up eight or ten at a time. The mode of preserving it is this:—The animal is split down on one side, boiled, and preserved with a weight of stones, then stretched open by strips of bamboo, dried in the sun, and afterwards by smoke, when it is fit to put away in bags, but requires frequent exposure to the sun. A thousand make a picol of about 125 Dutch pounds, and 100 nicols are a cargoe for a proa. It is carried to Timor-Laoet, and sold to the Chinese, who meet them there, and when all the proas are assembled the fleet returns to Macassar. There are two kinds of trepang. The black, called 'boatoo,' is sold to the Chinese for 40 dollars the picol; the white or grey, called 'koro,' is worth no more than 20 dollars. In the Gulf of Carpentaria we did not observe any other kind than the koro or grey slug.

#### Pobassoo's Voyages.—

"Pobassoo had made six or seven voyages from Macassar to this coast within the preceding 20 years, and he was one of the first who came, but had never seen any ship here before. This road was the first rendezvous of this division to take in water previously to going into the gulf. One of the proas had been lost the year before, and much enquiry was made concerning the pieces of wreck we had seen, and a canoe's rudder being produced it was recognised as having belonged to her. They sometimes had skirmishes with the native inhabitants of the coast. Pobassoo himself had been formerly sneared in the knee, and a man had been slightly wounded since their arrival in this road. They cautioned us much to beware of the natives. They had no knowledge of any European settlement in







MR. H. PINDER.



CAPT. H. R. MARSH.



MR. E. O. ROBINSON.



THE LATE  
MR. AENEAS J. GUNN, F.R.G.S.

this country, and on learning the name of Port Jackson, the son of Pobasso made a memorandum of it. I could find no other nautical instrument among them than a very small pocket compass, apparently of Dutch manufacture. By this their course is directed at sea, and without the aid of any chart or astronomical observation. They carry a month's water in joints of bamboo, and their food is rice, cocoanuts, and dried fish, with a few fowls for the chiefs. My numberless questions were answered patiently and with apparent sincerity. Pobasso even stopped one day longer, at my desire, than he had intended, for the north-west monsoon, he said, would not blow quite a month longer, and he was rather late. I rewarded his trouble and that of his companions with several presents, principally iron tools, which they seemed anxious to possess, and he begged of me an English jack, which he afterwards carried at the head of his squadron. He also expressed a desire for a letter to show to any other ship he might meet, and I accordingly wrote him a note to Captain Baudin, whom it seemed probable he might encounter in the gulf, either going or returning.

—How the Proas Came to New Holland.—

"I made many enquiries concerning the Malay trepang fishers whom we had met at the entrance of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

and learned the following particulars:—The natives of Macassar had been long accustomed to fish for trepang among islands in the vicinity of Java and upon a dry shoal lying to the south of Rottee, but about 20 years ago one of the proas was driven by the north-west monsoon to the coast of New Holland, and, finding the trepang to be abundant, they afterwards returned, and had continued to fish there since that time. The Governor was of the opinion that the Chinese did not meet them at Timor-Laoet, but at Macassar itself, where they are accustomed to trade for birds' nests, trepang, sharks' fins, &c., and it therefore seems probable that the proas rendezvous only at Timor-Laoet on quitting Carpentaria, and then return in a fleet with their cargoes. The value of the common trepang at Canton was said to be 40 dollars the picol, and for the best or black kind 60, which agrees with what I had been told in Malay Road, allowing to the Chinese the usual profit of cent. per cent. from Macassar to their own country."

The Government Resident incorporated these extracts from the great navigator's journal in his report of 1885 "for the purpose of directing attention to the importance of making Port Darwin itself the emporium for the traffic at least of the products of our own coast."

## HUNTING MALAY PROAS.

### MR SEARCY'S CRUISES.

#### No. II.

Mr. Alfred Searcy had several exciting cruises after the Malay proas while he was Sub-Collector of Customs at Port Darwin. With him were associated Mr. E. O. Robinson, who was revenue officer on the coast, and Mr. H. Pinder, who has since been transferred to Port Adelaide. The men from Macassar had many thrilling adventures along our northern coast, while the experiences which befell Messrs. Searcy, Robinson, and Pinder in their efforts to collect duty and licences from the proas are seldom indeed enjoyed by a custom house officer.

—Cruise of the Flying Cloud.—

Towards the end of the year 1883 the three officers named went for a six weeks' cruise in search of Malay proas in the Government schooner Flying Cloud. Mr. Searcy's diary of this trip is particularly interesting. After a graphic description of the voyage from Port Darwin, which was left on November 30, the nar-

rative continues:—"December 26—Weighed at sunrise and proceeded into Bowen Straits. At 10 a.m. sighted three proas anchored in a small bay N. of Cliff Point—the only cape named in the straits—completely sheltered from N. and N.W. winds. The natives call the place Adjaka, the Malay's Oojountambanoonoo. We anchored close to the proas in five fathoms. The masters of the Malay craft came on board the cutter, and we settled what revenue each had to pay.

—By Force of Arms.—

"About sunset we saw that one fellow intended making off before he had finally settled. We pulled off to him, pointing out as well as we were able that we had not come there solely for the purpose of looking at his ugly phiz, and that before departing he must pay cash up, after which he might go to—heaven if he liked. He, however, defied us, and the crew took not the slightest notice, and calmly continued

their work of getting under way. Something definite in these circumstances had to be done, so we three customs officers jumped on board and presented our revolvers at them. The soothing influence of the pistols was astonishing. Not another move towards getting up sail was made, and the fellows engaged at it standing on the steps of the mast as soon as they caught sight of the revolvers dropped on the decks without being told—shut up in fact as completely and easily as ever did an easy going telescope. We then had no trouble in convincing the master that it would be expedient to alter his mind, and give up other engagements till he had fulfilled ours. I must admit that I thought the show of authority rather hazardous, as all the crew carried murderous looking creeses, and they had numbers of spears on board, many of them poisoned. Two made sail at night as soon as I had finished with them, and the other left the next morning.

#### —Description of the Proas.—

"The proas are most peculiar looking craft, and present a most clumsy appearance. The hull is of wood, and the top, sides, deck roof, and yards are made of bamboo, the sails of matting, and many of the ropes and hawsers of plaited cane. They are steered by two rudders, one on either side of the stern. Some of them carry iron anchors, others wooden ones with heavy stones lashed to them. Often when the anchor is let go a man is sent down to see that it is properly fixed in good holding ground. The mast is a peculiar concern, being formed of wood or bamboo, having two stays, so that in appearance it resembles a lengthy trident, the spaces between the masts and stays being fitted with wooden steps, on which the sailors stand to hoist and roll up the sail, which unrolls again by a simple contrivance like a window blind. The orthodox way of getting on board is over the bow, that being close to the water's edge, the stern being away up in the air. You then climb a beam, and step across an opening to the deck in front of the captain's cabin, which is situated on one side of the bows, a similar one being on the opposite side for the second in command. The deck is of split bamboo, worked together with wire or fibre, and can be rolled up at pleasure. The entrance to the cabins is about 2 ft. x 2 ft. 6 in. Of course to enter or leave you must go on your hands and knees. Inside there is room for a man to sit or lie down in. The stern, which is high up, has several small rooms, or holes, like a great pigeon house, and in these and on top of the cargo the crew live, the galley being a large iron pan with a quantity of sand in it to light the fire on. The proas have a sort of bowsprit rigged out, and sometimes carry two or three head sails. On top of the houses they carry plenty of spare bamboos and rattans, which they get at the island of Kissa, near Timor, on the way down.

#### —The Malays.—

"Some of the Malays have not bad features, but others again are awful looking villains. Every one has his creese, or a sort of chopper, at his side, and with bright red lips and black teeth, caused by chewing the betel nut, looks anything but inviting or fascinating.

#### —The Dredging Canoes.—

"The dredging canoes used by the Malays are about 25 ft. long, 2 ft. deep, and 4 ft. beam, and are cut out of solid logs, being perfect models. The solid portion is raised about 2 ft., the planks being fastened on with treenails and caulked with leaves. An immense outrigger is fixed on one side, upon which the men perch themselves when the outrigger is to windward, the more wind the more men on it. They carry large mat sails, and when under sail present an extremely fine sight. Many of the canoes have two-pounders slung in the bow.

#### —Food for the Crew.—

"The crew live principally on rice and the fish they catch. They carry a lot of coconuts and coconut oil, and apparently for a luxury a sort of sweetmeat made of a coarse treacle and rice mixed together and firmly pressed into bamboos."

#### —Cruise of the Fleetwing.—

In March, 1884, the Acting Government Resident received information from Port Essington that several Macassar proas had passed that port without reporting and entering as they had been instructed to do. Mr. G. R. McMinn immediately arranged with Mr. Searcy (sub-collector of customs) to organise a party, and proceed with them to enforce the law with regard to levying customs duties and collecting licences from delinquent proas. The steamer Fleetwing, 30 tons, was chartered for the purpose. The official report of the Government Resident stated:—"Four proas were discovered, and as they were vessels that had been boarded the previous year and instructed as to the course to be adopted in the future, it was evident beyond doubt that their intention was to defraud the customs. In these circumstances the sub-collector would have felt justified in seizing the vessels, but the size of the steamer and the strength of the party were not sufficient to enable him to do so. He, therefore, adopted the course of fining the captain of each. This will have a very salutary effect, and, I believe, will prevent any further attempts at evasion on the part of any of the Malays visiting the coast."

#### —Macassar Customs.—

In the course of his diary Mr. Searcy, after describing the earlier portions of the trip, says:—"We passed between the south Goulbourn and Sims Islands, and were cheered soon afterwards by sighting a dredging canoe, and very shortly opened out two proas in a very nice and apparently well-sheltered bay. We had to make





**MR. C. E. HERBERT,**  
 Senior Member for the Northern Territory, since appointed  
 Government Resident and Judge of the Northern Territory.



**MR. S. J. MITCHELL,**  
 Junior Member for the Northern Territory.

a long round to clear the reef, and eventually brought up near the proas in two fathoms of water. The masters—Rimba and Poi Nando—came on board. I had no difficulty with these men, and they paid duties, &c., without a murmur. The Macassars seem to have some peculiar customs. When they first come on the coast, and before they begin trepanning, they lower to the bottom a new plate, which contains portions of the best food they have. According to the blacks, the previous night they had performed the ceremony of making wind, apparently thinking it was time to shift their ground."

—Malays and Blacks.—

A few days later the Fleetwing\* steamed under Entrance Island. Mr. Searcy says:—"This is not a favourite camping place, for the natives are awfully treacherous. Some time ago they killed the master of one of the proas, so next year the brother went there and pretended to start fishing. He managed to make friends with the natives, a lot of whom he induced to cross from the mainland to the island, and then opened upon them with his two-pounders. A few managed to make to the water, but the Malays were in the canoes waiting for them, and finished them."

—A Lonely Grave.—

After several days the Fleetwing ran in to Arnheim Bay and anchored some distance from the island on the west side, where Bapa Paloe, a gentleman Mr. Searcy was anxious to catch, was supposed to be. Mr. Searcy says:—"We landed at the old camp at the island. To all appearance nobody had been at it for years. It would make a fine picture. It was formed under some immense tamarind trees of

a great age. The old fire-place was overgrown with weeds and creepers, and alongside is the grave of one of the masters of a proa, who was murdered here some years ago by the natives. At one time there had been a sort of fence round it. One of my natives, Moyout by name, who was present when the murder took place, but who says he had nothing to do with it, tells the story. A blackfellow went on board the proa, and demanded some tobacco and spirit. The master refused and then struck him. The man did not appear to take offence, but remained apparently friendly towards the captain, and soon after tempted him to go ashore, and thence into the bush where he was set upon by a number of natives and killed. They then went on board the proa, killed the cook, and helped themselves to the stores."

—Bapa Paloe.—

From indications at a snug camping place on a little sandy island adjacent it was evident the party had missed the Malays by a day or two. The Fleetwing, subsequently steamed for Mallison's Island, the next nearest camping place. Mr. Searcy says:—"I had stationed a boy at the masthead, and about 10 o'clock we were delighted to hear him sing out 'I see one fellow proa.' We steamed in carefully and there sure enough was my friend Bapa Paloe, anchored in a nice little cove, his smoke house being out of sight, and unless we had kept a sharp lookout we would have missed him. When at anchor they always lower their masts, and at times it is very difficult to pick the hull out from the land. I don't think that Bapa Paloe was pleased to see us; but before we left next day, I am certain that he was satisfied that the South Australian Government meant business."

\*On page 8 this vessel was stated to be of 30 tons burthen. Her measurement was 21 tons net, and 31 tons gross.

## HUNTING MALAY PROAS.

### MR. SEARCY'S CRUISES.

#### No. III.

In my last article I concluded with an account of how Bapa Paloe was captured at Mellison Island and made to pay up. A few days afterwards the Fleetwing steamed into Melville Bay and discovered two more proas. Mr. Searcy says:—"The masters of the proas soon came on board with their papers. They were the Bonding Patola, Oosing, master, and the Pallidgawaya, Daeng Matoona, master. To the firstnamed I had

already issued a licence. Daeng Matoona had come down in company with Rimbah and Poa Nando, but had got separated during a squall. Daeng Matoona made the same excuse as the others—rough weather for not calling at Port Essington. Yet as he did not give the slightest trouble, but paid up the full duty at once, I only fined him £10, and then, handing him his papers, I warned him of the punishment he would

entail on himself by non-compliance in the future with the regulations."

#### —The Malays and the Natives.—

Mr. Searcy explained to me that all the papers on the proas were made out from Macassar to Marigie, which means black-fellows' country or unknown land. All the coast natives spoke Macassar. In some cases half-breeds were to be met with. Mr. Searcy remembers a really beautiful girl at Port Essington named Maryanagene who had Malay blood in her. She would have made the heroine of one of Louis Becke's stories wherein that writer deals with the love of the white man for the brown woman. A great number of natives were encountered in Cadell Straits—named after Frank Cadell, who first navigated the River Murray—a highway for the proas. Speaking of the aborigines Mr. Searcy observes in his diary:—"There is little doubt that they look upon the whites as enemies, especially since the duties have been levied upon the Malays, as they do not get the quantity of spirits they used to. It is a well-known fact, however, that whites from the sea are better received than those coming from inland."

#### —What happened to Cadado.—

The natives in Melville Bay were found to be finely made, healthy-looking men, but rather wild. While some of them were on board the Fleetwing Oesing and Daeng Matoona came off, and complained that the chief Cadado and his men were in the habit of going on board the proas as soon as the rice was cooked for their hands and stealing it. Mr. Searcy says:—"I talked to Cadado, and told him if he interfered with the Malays white men would come and growl. I also told the Malays that they must defend themselves, but that if they used unnecessary violence they would be punished. Cadado promised never to steal again." Cadado must have broken his promise, for he was subsequently killed by the men from Macassar.

#### —Cruise of the Palmerston.—

Mr. Searcy had another interesting cruise in the Palmerston to the Roper and Macarthur Rivers in 1885. Mr. E. O. Robinson's trepanning station at the mouth of the Buffalo River, Bowen Straits, was visited. Mr. Robinson had made a very compact place, and erected all the necessary outbuildings, smokehouse, &c., for carrying on the lucrative and dirty occupation. The party found that the owner was somewhat vexed because several Malay proas had been there, made his niggers drunk, and then enticed the best of them away. It was on this trip, when inside North Goulburn Island, that the Palmerston sighted 16 dredging canoes, and shortly after opened out four proas to which they belonged. Mr. Searcy says the fleet of canoes under sail was one of the grandest sights he has ever seen. Bapa Paloe, who

was mate on this occasion, was pleased to meet the Sub-Collector again.

#### —Life on the Proas.—

Many striking stories could be written round the adventurous and rough life on the proas, and the many dangers which the men from Macassar encountered both by sea and land. The following official account from Mr. E. O. Robinson, who wrote from Buffalo Bay in January, 1887, will give an idea of the thrilling experiences which befell the Malays:—"The weather from December 14 till December 24 was exceptionally rough, and two proas, the Erang Polea and Lasalassaya, went ashore on the north side of Melville Island. The crews were attacked by the natives, and they had to clear in their canoes. They succeeded after many hardships in reaching here all safe. The Lasalassaya was wrecked on December 21, and, owing to the hostility of the natives, could only get out two canoes, in which the whole of the crew, 27 in number, reached here on December 29 in a starving condition. I gave the Malays rice—out of what I had been obliged to take in part payment of duties—to the value of £1, and they proceeded down the coast in quest of the other proas. The Erang Polea was wrecked on December 16, and the crew, numbering 33, were also attacked by the natives, but Oesing, the master, is a determined fellow, and with the aid of an old carbine kept them at bay while he fitted up his four large canoes. He took a supply of rice, coconuts, &c., but was very unfortunate, as one canoe capsized in the heavy sea, and they all got swept into the Gulf of Van Diemen, and did not arrive here till January 4, in a very sorry condition. I also supplied this man with rice to take him down the coast. Nothing has been seen or heard of the proa unaccounted for, but one of the canoes passed a dead Malay floating in the water, and as none of the proas reported having lost any one it is feared that the missing proa has foundered at sea." In 1895 two proas, named respectively Bonding Patola and Tjinna Motava, were wrecked in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Oesing, the master of the former, a man about 50 years of age, said he had been coming to the coast yearly ever since he was a little boy, and had seen nothing like the weather before. The sea smashed the top of his proa in and killed two men, while the other proa lost one man. It took the six canoes, containing the captain and 45 members of the crews, three weeks to reach Bowen Straits, where they were fed and kindly treated by Mr. Robinson.

#### —Malay Names.—

The men from Macassar never called their camping places on the coast by the English or chart name, but christened them in their own language. Mr. Searcy kept a record of these titles, and he has kindly supplied me with the names of some of the camping places to



**HIS HONOR, MR. JUSTICE DASHWOOD, GOVERNMENT RESIDENT OF THE  
NORTHERN TERRITORY FROM 1892-1905.**





the eastward of Port Darwin. Our own map name is given first, the Malay substitute for it being printed in brackets:—Popham Bay (Limbamammo), Blue Mud Bay (Limapeo), Trepong Bay West (Limba-bunang tunang), Trepong Bay East (Limbabeenunga), Record Point, Port Essington (Limba Caraja), Port Bremer (Limba Mootara), Raffle Bay (Angarasetora), Crocker Island, first camp (Batueja), Crocker Island, second camp (Oojouncaroronggo), Crocker Island (calling place, revenue station (Oojountambanoonoo), Copeland Island, Mount Norris Bay (Cara Peepeepee), Malay Bay (Limba Rajaing), Goulburn Islands (Mungaroda), King River (Marago Chukee), Junction Bay (Limbaluchumbo), Entrance Island, Liverpool River (Lee Monie Monie), Castlereagh Bay (Limba Tordee), Cadell Straits, first camp (Morrungo), Cadell Straits, second camp (Oojoumburon), Cadell Straits, third camp (Salalaboo), Buckingham Bay (Paringa), Arnhem Bay (Limba Katona), Arnhem Bay, west side (Beir), Mallison's Island (Limba Chepa), Melville Bay, Gulf of Carpentaria (Limba Pandria), Melville Bay, Gulf of Carpentaria, outside (Limba Jona), Melville Island, Gulf of Carpentaria (Coolacora), Sir Rodrick's Rocks, inside (Carra Carringa), Caledon Bay (Mungoola), Groote Island, north (Dylompo), Blue Mud Bay (Churapee), Roper (Wakea), Pellew Group (Dinna Seeda).

### —The Wealth of the Deep.—

Mr. Searcy says:—"In duty and licence fee we used to collect on an average £50 from each proa, or about £500 a year." Up to date several thousand pounds must have gone into the revenue from this source. A decade ago an authority, from careful estimates, founded upon information obtained by Mr. E. O. Robinson, placed the value of trepong, tortoiseshell, &c., taken from our coast during the preceding century at £1,500,000. The estimate was based upon a calculation of an average of 25 proas every year taking away about 10 tons each of trepong, valued at the low rate of £80 per ton.

### —The Taste of Trepong.—

In an article in one of the recent Magazines Lieut.-Col. Newnham-Davis descants on the finest dinners he ever ate. With them he classes a native dinner in Hongkong. Among the items on the menu was trepong, and the epicure writes:—"Trepong, which we know as beche-de-mer followed. It is the sea-slug from the Loo-choo Islands, and served as an entree it tastes very much like turtle fat though richer. To counteract its richness a great China bowl full of boiled bamboo shoots was handed round with it."

## PRODUCTS OF THE DEEP.

### PEARLS AND FISH.

#### No. IV.

The previous articles dealt more particularly with the Malay proas and the trepong industry as carried on by the men from Macassar. I suggested to Mr. Searcy that he should tell me something about some of the other products of the deep which, if properly worked and protected, would be a source of great wealth to the Northern Territory. So, forgetting all about his diary, Mr. Searcy carried his memory back to the time when he was Sub-Collector of Customs at Port Darwin, and fell to giving me his experiences of pearling and deepsea fishing.

#### —Pearls.—

"In addition to the products mentioned in the last articles, the Malays procured and took away great numbers of pearls. It is impossible to estimate the value of the

treasure, but some idea of it may be formed from what I saw myself, and also from the information I gained along the coast. On one occasion I saw on board one of the proas three pickle bottles full of pearls of many shapes and sizes, but I don't think any among them were of great value. The master of the proa, I was informed, did not produce the good ones. He was too suspicious I suppose. I received reliable information that a proa the previous season had taken away 35 cattie's weight of pearls. The natives collected the pearls and saved them for the Malays, and received grog and tobacco in exchange. On all the outlying reefs at low water pearlshell can always be procured. Pearls are found in other descriptions of shells. I had given to me a pair of beautiful shells, a sort of mussel, from which I was informed a

superb flesh-coloured pearl was obtained, which was sent to Macassar and realized hundreds of pounds. When in Cadell Straits a young buck who had done the grand tour—that is, had been to Macassar—assured us that he had pearls as large as the top of his thumb, which he said he would bring to us. To give us confidence he agreed we could cut his throat if he did not keep his word. He did not give us the chance, however, of taking him at his word, and of course we did not get the pearls.

—The Great Place for Pearls.—

"The information I gained while on the coast pointed to the neighbourhood of Dylumpo (north end of Groote Island) being the great place for pearls. I landed on the island in several places, but could not discover the particular camping place. Wherever the pearls came from there is no doubt that great quantities were taken away. The bulk of them were no doubt rubbish, but some of great value went the same way. It is impossible to estimate the value of the shell and the pearls secured. Two or three years ago in Port Darwin a pearl was sold for £900. A man went from Thursday Island to buy it.

—Tortoiseshell.—

"The Malays took away immense quantities of tortoiseshell, which was also collected by the natives. When I went down the coast on one occasion I obtained a magnificent shell, worth about £4. The coast is infested with hawk-bill turtles, from which the article of commerce known as tortoiseshell is taken. There is also an unlimited supply of the green-back turtle, from which the famous soup is made. I have eaten the hawk-bill turtle, but the green-back is considered the proper one for edible purposes. I have seen the niggers kill the turtles, and after cutting out the meat scoop out the rich green fat, which lies between the meat and the shell and eat it hot and raw. The turtles come up above highwater mark and scratch out a nest in the sand where they lay their eggs and then cover them over. The eggs are hatched by natural heat. In the first nest I found I obtained 10 dozen fresh eggs. We used them in omelettes and flaps, and in fact did them up in all sorts of ways. If it was not for their natural enemies the sea would be teeming with turtles. After being hatched, and while on their way down to the sea the young turtles are preyed on by birds, and then those that reach the water are set upon by fish. On one occasion I found a piece of tortoiseshell in an alligator. A man-of-war once entered Port Darwin having on board a great number of turtles which were captured in Cambridge Gulf. They were distributed round the town. I have often seen turtles up to 70 and 80 lb. weight.

—Deep Sea Fishing.—

"The north coast teems with fish. The majority of them are splendid eating. They

are equal, if not superior, to anything caught in the south. They comprise grey, red, and golden snapper, jumping mullet, groper, rock cod, and barramundi; besides other varieties the names of which I am ignorant of. Some of the fish grow to an extraordinary size. A groper was caught at the McArthur which weighed 6 cwt. I brought the skull of this fish to Adelaide and gave it to Dr. Stirling. I remember a rock cod being caught at Port Darwin which turned the scales at 3 cwt. It was sold retail to the Chinamen at 6d. a lb. The Celestials value this fish above all others. It is not the same as the rock cod caught in these waters. The great place to fish at Port Darwin is in the deep pools in the harbour. There is a channel across the mouth of the Blackmore River where there is a drop from 5 to 23 fathoms of water. We used to catch all descriptions of fish here right on the bottom. You can only fish here at slack water, dead neaps. At spring tide there is a fearful rip. I have seen the rip take a round turn out of the launches. I remember on one occasion four of us caught 140 red snapper, also other kinds—about a quarter of a ton of fish—in two hours.

—Prawns.—

"Prawns are numerous in Port Darwin. In the season Chinese sampans bring in tons of prawns. The Celestials dry them and send them to China. On two occasions I wrote to the Government with reference to this industry. When the prawns were spawning the Chinese, with a very fine net, would catch hundredweights of the young ones, not larger than mosquitoes. In this way millions were destroyed. I saw a telegram from Western Australia recently stating that reports from the north-west coast, where trawling is being conducted for the Government, show that there appears to be a great possibility of establishing the prawn fishing industry there. The prawns discovered are very large, measuring 10 inches, while the fishing area is practically unlimited.

—Other Fishing.—

"The Chinese also take immense quantities of small fish, which in my time used to be served up as whitebait. It is most important that the fisheries in these seas should be protected, and some revenue derived from them. The Chinese used to stake nets for hundreds of yards alongside the mangroves at high water. Then at low water they would go out and pick up the fish. The Mongolians also use seines for catching fish. I remember the alligators used to play sad havoc with the nets. It very often happened that a swordfish would be taken. I had a sword from one of them which was 6 ft. long. It is said that the fish is four times the length of the sword, but I can hardly imagine that. Crayfish are caught on the pearling grounds, but the pearlers are very chary about taking them off the bottom, because if they



LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER'S SON AT POINT CHARLES RIDING A TURTLE A LA  
DE BOUEMONT.



do the sharks will invariably swoop down on them. Sharks are extremely fond of crayfish. Great fishing is done from the proas with a towline. These lines are made by the Malays themselves, and tanned in the stuff in which they boil trepang. The lines are about 50 fm. long, with about 18 ft. of brass wire at the end. The hook is of brass, and the bait, which is a feather, is tied on to a piece of bamboo that works up and down the wire. It is a most ingenious contrivance. In this way they catch fish larger than barracouta.

—Crabs and Oysters.—

"There are numerous crabs on the north coast which are beautiful eating. The shells are as large as pudding plates. A great way to catch them is to put a piece of canvas on the end of a stick and shove it into the holes in the roots of the mangroves. The crabs hang on tenaciously to the canvas, and are dragged out and captured. The Chinese had a great way of cooking them. They would take the flesh out, and after cooking it chop up with herbs and condiments, then put it back into the shell, bake it, and serve it on the table in the shell. Another great delicacy are the oysters. The rock oysters at Port Essington are simply dreams. They are about the size of the yoke of a large egg. When we wanted them for stewing or for soup we used to send the niggers for them. They would break the shell open on the rocks, pick the fish out, and fill their baskets with them, but when we wanted to eat them fresh, the niggers brought them in their shells as we preferred to open them ourselves. I have sat up to my waist in water beside a heap of oysters and eaten the succulent bivalves till I was satisfied. The toughest feed of oysters I ever had was on Middle Head, Port Essington. We were buffalo shooting, and had a splendid meal of roasted bivalves. The water was so bad owing to the buffaloes having rolled in it that we couldn't drink it, but we carried a 'baby,' and satisfied our thirst with square gin, and I am here to tell the tale. Another sort of oyster grows upon the stems of the mangroves. Very often they follow the shape of the branch, and you get them up to three and four inches long.

They are coarse eating raw, but are capital when cooked.

—Fresh Water Fish.—

"Not long after the railway reservoir was formed in Port Darwin fish were caught in it, but they could only be taken with the fly. They ran up to nearly a foot in length. I don't know what they were, and it is a mystery how they got into the reservoir.

—A Big Fish.—

"I went out in one of the pearling boats on one occasion. We were in 13 fm. of water. After the diver had sent up some shell I baited my hook with the pearl oyster, and started fishing on the opposite side of the boat. Soon I felt a great tug at my line, and called out to those on board that I had a big fish on. After a great deal of excitement I discovered it was the diver playing with the line. But I had my revenge, as I caught some beautiful fish later on, and while diving operations were proceeding.

—Spearing Fish.—

"When at Oojountambanoona, in Bowen Straits, on one trip, I saw a nigger with a spear prodding a large mass of coral rock. This was at low water, and the native speared a rock cod every time. The fish had been left here by the tide. The blacks are experts at spearing fish. It is a perfect picture to see a nigger spearing fish in the water. The aborigines at Port Essington have a very clever way of catching fish in rockholes under water. It is done with a plant which they secure in the jungle. The plant is well bruised, fastened to a stick, and thrust into the hole. It must be a strong narcotic, for if there are any fish there they are turned up, but afterwards recover.

—Dried Fish.—

"Besides prawns the Chinese send great quantities of dried fish away to China, and also to Melbourne. On one of our trips fish which had been locally dried was taken for the crew. It had been hanging up in the store for months. We tried it at one meal and found it so excellent that we ate it regularly afterwards."

## THE SPORTSMAN'S PARADISE.

### BUFFALO AND WILD CATTLE.

#### No. V.

When the House is sitting Mr. Alfred Searcy is too busy to continue his delightful yarns about the Northern Territory, but in the dinner hours and on the off days I have been able to get the Acting Clerk

of the House of Assembly to draw upon his store of knowledge of "The Land of the Dawning." In the last chats Mr. Searcy told of some of his experiences by land. He said:—"Some years ago The Pall Mall

Budget, when commenting on the account of one of my cruises on the coast, in the course of which I had described some of the sport we had experienced, referred to the Northern Territory as the sportsman's paradise, and I do not think a happier name could have been selected. To enjoy the shooting in any way the season has to be studied, for it would be of little use going to the Territory in the wet period of the year.

#### —Buffalo Shooting.—

"I dare say there are comparatively few people who are aware that we have such big game as buffalo on the north coast. Of course, they are not indigenous to the country, but are the offspring of those left by the soldiers when the old settlements were abandoned. Only a few beasts were left, but it is simply marvellous how they have increased. Shooting buffalo for their hides was only carried on in a very small way during the first few years I was in Port Darwin, but it suddenly became a regular industry. The records at the custom house afford proof of that, for during a little over 10 years nearly 50,000 hides were exported. The buffalo on Melville Island are descended from those left by the soldiers when Fort Dundas was abandoned. Although it was known that buffalo existed there, many thought that they were not numerous, as it was considered that the niggers would run down the calves and kill them, thus keeping the increase in check. Experience showed, however, that such was not the case. Some years ago the island was taken up, the buffalo shooters got to work, and several thousand were killed before it was determined to give the place a rest. It was found that the niggers had no idea that young buffalo was good tucker. This accounted for the great increase. The aborigines were meat-eaters right enough, for they killed and utilized kangaroo and birds. The buffalo on the mainland spread wonderfully. As the herds multiplied the old bulls were driven out and wandered great distances. I saw their tracks on the Roper; I heard of them on the McArthur; and some of the backblockers informed me they had been seen in Queensland. Just before I left Darwin the keeper at Point Charles Lighthouse shot an old bull which turned up there one night, fancying, I suppose, he had at last reached a haven of rest.

#### —Taming Buffalo.—

"Some slight effort, I believe, was made to tame and utilize the animals, but no good ever came of it. When I first went to Port Essington they had about a dozen fairly tame ones, which were herded during the day by an old lubra, and yarded at night. You may be sure a strong yard was needed, for if buffalo make up their minds to shift, something has to go. I believe these beasts eventually wandered away. Some years before a strong yard was erected, and a lot of buffalo were run in. It ap-

peared that no provision was made to give them a drink, so it was determined to drive them to water. The yard was opened, and that was the last ever seen of these animals. The driving experiment was a miserable failure—confidence misplaced. A yarn used to be told—I cannot vouch for the truth of the statement, but I will give it to you as I have heard it. A man managed to get a team of buffalo to Southport, and in due time they were hitched to a dray. A start was made, and that was the last ever seen of the man, buffalo, or dray.

#### —Hunting Buffalo.—

"I had many turns at the buffalo with fair results. It was hard work, for we had to walk great distances, and to carry our rifles, ammunition, and revolvers. I shall not forget my first experience at buffalo hunting. We started across the harbour at daybreak. It was low water, and the trepang was visible when passing over the reefs. The Malays were walking about picking it up with short spears. During a walk of about 12 miles we only started two buffalo, but could not remain up with them to keep the dogs going, on account of the grass, which was away above our heads. There had been the usual heavy tropical dew, so the consequence was we were soon wet through when trying to press our way after the game. We did not even see the buffalo, so, of course, did not get a shot. There were fresh pads and tracks everywhere, but we could not sight a beast. After a camp Robinson—'Buffalo Bill,' with whom I went—started by himself, and had better luck, managing to knock over a cow, but not until he had put six bullets into her. Even then it is doubtful if he would have got her if he had not wounded her calf. If Robinson had had a fair sight, the beast would not have had a chance, for he was a splendid shot. It would have done your heart good to see Robinson full belt after a buffalo, for he never then worried about wearing boots, sticks and stones never troubling him. His full dress was usually a revolver. To return to our buffalo. When following Robinson up I came across the calf, and finished it with my revolver. I carted the head aboard, but it was too rich when cocked for me, so I passed. When I reached Robinson he and the Malays had commenced operations on the cow. Just then a fierce south-east rainsquall came up, and made us feel bitterly cold. A good fire was soon started, and slices of liver on the coals combined to make things a bit more comfortable. In similar circumstances when near the ocean I have found the sea water far warmer than rain, and have kept in it up to my neck until the squall was over. We reached the cutter at 7 o'clock with all the meat. We were just about played out, having done a good 20-mile tramp. Whenever we procured a beast, all the meat was taken on board and jerked by the crew. I used to carry the tongue, brains, and un-



SKETCHES DRAWN BY MR. H. STOCKDALE WHILE ON THE NORTH COAST.





descent. Buffalo brains are not bad by any means.

—Miraculous Escapes.—

"Only on one occasion did we have a buffalo turn on us, but before he came too close a bullet reminded him of an engagement elsewhere. The hunters and the niggers with them have at times experienced some nasty falls with the buffaloes, and in several instances they have been gored. Some miraculous escapes have occurred. When the hunters have been down, and the beasts have been trying to get at them with their horns, they have crept out, and catching hold of the horns, have vaulted over the backs of the animals and escaped. The possibility of this can be realized, when one understands the size of some of the horns. I have a pair just 6 ft. across, and I have seen a pair measure 9 ft. I was never lucky enough to have a turn at hunting on horseback, which became the fashion when shooting developed into an industry.

—A Wonderful Horse.—

"One of the shooters, Paddy Cahill, had a splendidly trained horse which he used in his hunting; in fact, the equine pretty well did the work. As soon as a mob of buffalo were sighted the horse, as a matter of course, galloped alongside while his master attended to his particular part of the game. Forty-five in one day is, I think, sufficient proof that rider and horse understood the business thoroughly. When the shooting for the day was finished the horse of its own accord would proceed to each carcass and stand there until the skinning operations were finished. The master of the craft trading between the buffalo shooters and Darwin went with the hunters one day to have a look at the fun. So surprised was he at the performance of the horse, he said, 'Say, Paddy, why don't you give the horse a knife and let him skin the beasts.' Another accomplishment of the horse was the manner in which he would at a word from his master chase objectionable niggers out of the camp. You may be sure that the niggers respected that animal.

—Novel Horse Feed.—

"What do you think of feeding horses on geese eggs? Such was the case, however, when a party were stuck up on the Adelaide during the wet season. The niggers used to bring in canoe loads of the eggs, which were broken into buckets and supplied to the horses.

—Wild Cattle.—

"On Vashan Head, on the west side of the entrance to Port Essington, are a considerable number of English cattle, the ori-

ginal stock being a few left by the old settlers. It is strange that they never wandered away from that particular spot. It might be thought that being so inbred they would have deteriorated to a great extent. To me it did not seem so, for I found them well-grown, upstanding beasts, fierce and active. We had an experience with a bull which was rather entertaining, especially when it was all over. The following is an extract from my diary:—

Made a start after breakfast; blowing hard from north-west, heavy squalls, big sea between Spear and Record Points. Beat down to Knocker Bay, and, wind increasing, anchored. After dinner went ashore with rifles (three), but unfortunately only took a few cartridges. Everything in the shape of weight is a consideration when you have to carry revolver, &c., and have the chance of a good run. Landed on a nice sandy beach, engirt with beautiful foliage right to the edge of the water. Walked through some pretty country, in which we saw large numbers of squatter pigeons, but as we had no fowling piece, sighting them had to content us. Some of the jungle scenery is very beautiful, the banyans and creepers growing in especial luxuriance, the bright and delicate leaves of the latter affording a pleasing contrast to the dark evergreen of the foliage with which they intermingled. And there is another pet plant, known as the 'waitawhile' or 'bush lawyer,' both very appropriate names, for the pedestrian who gets embraced by the plant will find it pay to wait awhile, and no lawyer's grip on a rich client is more tenacious than the grasp of those exasperating thorns, which seldom leave their victims without some signs of the encounter, such as torn clothes or scratches. After a walk of about six miles, we heard cattle lowing, and, following up, soon spotted a beast. Robinson crawled up ahead of us, fired, and the beast fell. I then rose, fired, and struck. The beast then made off, and we lost it in the jungle after a fair run. Saw some nice cattle, struck another, but could not run it down, being pumped. Robinson then saw two fine bulls about 200 yards off; he fired, and broke the leg of one. He ran up to the animal, and fired his last cartridge, but missed, being winded, and all of a tremble. We then tried to settle him with revolvers, but it was no good, as he went for us all in turn, running like a greyhound. The bull gave me a run after I fired a shot at him, and he would not have had far to go, as I was thoroughly tired. The beast was close up, when I got a turn round a tree. Pinder then came in for his share of the fun. He got a shot at the bull, and the latter then went for him. Don't think Pinder ever travelled faster in his life, and the bull was only about 8 ft. away from the biped when the latter turned round a tree. We could not help laughing to see them both go, but were awfully thankful when we saw the bull give Pinder beat. It was nearly dark, and being several miles from the boat, we had to leave the bull, and start for home. The poor beast was awfully game. Got back to the Flying Cloud pretty well done up after our good 12 miles' walk, not to mention the little spurts with bulls."

## THE SPORTSMAN'S PARADISE.

### WILD PONIES AND BIRD LIFE.

#### No. VI.

The last article concluded with an account of an exciting hunt after wild cattle. It should be stated that the party returned on the following day to the bull whose leg had been broken and mercifully put an end to him. All the meat was taken on board the boat and jerked. Mr. Alfred Searcy's experiences in the Northern Territory are wonderful and varied. He next told me about wild ponies. He said:—"There were a considerable number of wild ponies in the neighbourhood of Port Essington, the descendants of those left by the settlers when that place was abandoned. Turning to my diary I find the following:—

Soon after breakfast we started for Middle Head. On the passage we saw several fine turtle. That was our share of them. On arrival, the tide being out, we had a long way to walk—during which we saw quantities of trepanning—the men hauling the boat. We finally landed at a small sandy beach, a very pretty spot. From the beach the ground rises with a gentle slope, and is covered with short green grass and beautiful trees. It has the appearance of a fine park, and one almost expected to see an ugly board stuck up warning off trespassers, or notifying that spring guns and traps were lying promiscuously around. As if in keeping with the scene, through the vistas in the foliage, we saw 20 or 30 wild ponies, quietly grazing, unsuspecting of danger, and looking as if only kept to add another thing of beauty to the sylvan scene which surrounded them. Creeping cautiously, we managed to get pretty close to the ponies and sat down to watch them. They seemed to be of fine stamp and in excellent condition. Suddenly they saw us, and immediately the peaceful scene was changed. Snorting and terrified they rounded up, gazed at us for a few seconds, and then, with a wild stampede, galloped from our sight.

"I do not think that any recognised effort was ever made to run the ponies in. I only remember one instance when a young mare was run down and brought to Port Darwin. I think the buffalo hunter, Paddy Cahill was the man who did it. Several were secured by being shot through the neck. The wounds quickly healed.

#### —Wild Fowl and Cockatoos.—

"The bird life on the swamps and rivers at times during the year is simply unlimited. I have seen acres of ducks of several descriptions and geese. Once we steamed 60 miles up the Adelaide, and I do not think that from the time we entered the mouth until we anchored the ducks ceased flying out of the growth on the banks. We had some sport, you may be sure. Talking of birds flying out from the banks reminds me that when we were up the Victoria River,

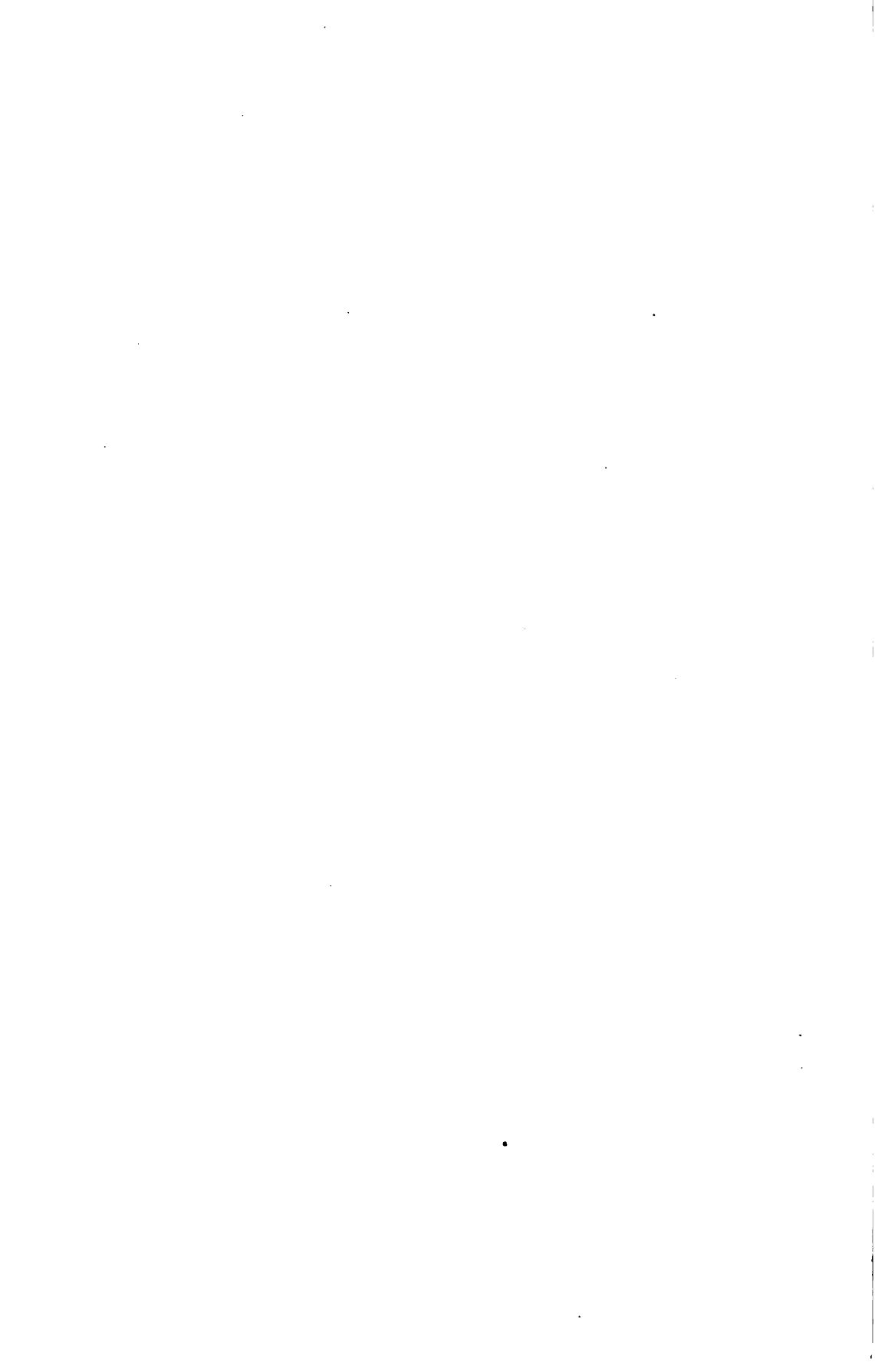
and were working our way round the Mosquito Flats, under the Dome at Curiosity Peak, we disturbed thousands and thousands of white cockatoos. They kept just ahead, screaming as if they were possessed of ten thousand devils. The noise was enough to drive us silly. The birds seemed to have been enjoying the position we were in, and the screeching may have been their idea of laughter. We had a hard, heart-breaking time in negotiating the flats. We could only work with the tides, and made but five miles in three days. Geese were often shot by the residents in Darwin and Southport while flying over to the lagoons at night. They were attracted by the sheen of the white roofs. They evidently took these for water, and would swoop down fairly close. Often an unwelcome surprise was in store for them. The lagoons and belts of jungle about 10 miles from Darwin were in the season a great place for ducks and geese. Many a happy day I put in there with others killing something. In the early part of the season the geese were splendid eating, but towards the end they fell off a lot—on account of the driving, I expect. We generally had niggers with us, and it was immense fun to see them attracting the geese by talking 'all same old man.'

#### —Other Sport.—

"There were usually other sorts of birds about to attract the sportsman, particularly the pigmy goose and squatter pigeon. The latter is a regular startler. Often you would be strolling along, when from your very feet there would proceed a flash and whirr, and a fine pigeon would settle on the top of a high tree. This was most satisfactory shooting, and the bird was something worth having when bagged. The same might be said of the pigmy goose. It is about the size of a domestic duck, of glorious plumage, and beautiful eating—just enough for two. The best pigmy goose shooting was obtained on the Adelaide. The late Capt. Carrington and the late Mr. R. W. Bernard and myself secured 43 in one afternoon. The Daly River is a splendid place for sport of many sorts. Besides alligators, of which more anon, there were brown, black, whistling, and Burdekin ducks, geese, native companions, jabbaroos, and ibis. The best shooting we had there was 56 ducks in a couple of hours. I have a vivid recollection of that day, for I was acting as 'slushy.' We had secured a kangaroo earlier in the day, the bulk of which



SKETCHES DRAWN BY MR. H. STOCKDALE.



I had boiled down for stock. Just imagine the giblets of 56 ducks stewed in kangaroo stock, in which a spoon would almost stand upright, and the usual fixings added. It was a dream, and the fame of it lasts to this day! Besides the squatter there are several other varieties of pigeons. The large bird known as the Torres Straits pigeon is at times secured, and generally adjacent to the banyan tree when in fruit. There are also several varieties of doves, of varying sizes. The bamboo jungles are the great places for doves, and many a good bag I have made; but it is not all enjoyment when you have to work your way through the bamboos.

—Native Companions, Bower Birds, and Parrots.—

"I have a great admiration for the native companions. When on the McArthur I saw the largest flock of these birds I ever witnessed. There must have been hundreds of them. I walked after the flock for some miles, but they just kept out of range, dancing minuets and quadrilles and bowing in a most artistic and graceful manner. I often think how Gould, the great ornithologist, would have enjoyed that sight. I must mention the jabbaroos, turkeys, ibis, black and white cockatoos, spoonbills, parrots, quail, and jungle fowl, besides many beautiful small birds, great numbers of which are trapped and exported every year. The bower bird is also to be found. When out after buffalo one day I was fortunate enough to get quietly close to a nest, and I saw the birds at play. A small island known as Shell Island on the other side of Darwin Harbour some years ago, at certain seasons, was a favourite camping place for a large variety of parrots. We used to post ourselves just before sundown under the trees near the mangroves, and wait the coming of the birds. If they happened along proceedings commenced and continued until

it was too dark to see them. Lanterns were then produced, and a search made for the birds among the mangrove roots. The largest take I heard of was 250. Suddenly the birds ceased to turn up at the island. We put the cause down to the fact that several of the crew of a pearling schooner who had died of beri beri were buried there.

—A Friendly Hint.—

"If ever by chance you go shooting in a swamp or lagoon in which there are plenty of reeds or rushes, and have a companion, let him go first. You will be surprised how easily you will get through in comparison with your friend. I learnt the lesson while shooting on a large lagoon. A companion and myself, to save a fairly long walk, started to cross the lagoon. We had 10 geese besides the guns to carry. There was not a breath of air, and it was one of the most trying times of the day. We managed to make the centre in a state of collapse; in fact, as far as I was concerned, I did not care if I never got out. After a little rest, however, we had another try, and reached the bank in due course. Another rest and an interview with the 'baby' put a different aspect on things, and the killing continued. We brought out our geese, and I walked in my companion's track. I have made use of that hint since. I never crossed that lagoon again, however. What enthusiasts will do for the sake of sport! I once had a pretty bad time in getting through a cane brake, or, rather, bamboo grass, which towered over my head. The heat was awful, and I felt that I should explode. The relief when the open was reached was truly wonderful. I was fairly tough, however, and did many idiotic things in the name of sport. I have done a sugar cane field with my gun, and am perfectly satisfied with that bit of work. I do not hanker for any other sort of employment in sugar cane."

## THE SPORTSMAN'S PARADISE.

### INCIDENTS OF THE TROPICS.

#### No. VII.

One evening in the dinner hour at Parliament House Mr. Searcy continued to tell me his experiences in the Northern Territory. It will be remembered that the last article dealt with sport of many descriptions.

—A Mangrove Swamp.—

"The most depressing and weird place I have shot in," said Mr. Searcy, "is a mangrove swamp, such mangroves and such swamps as are only met with in the tropics.

I am almost afraid to mention the size and the density of the growth for fear I might not be believed. Just listen to the description of a mangrove swamp by a dear old chum of mine, Aneas E. Gunn, who had great experiences on the north coast, and who had a pathetic end on an inland station. For the safety of the station he was on, poor old Gunn had to go out and kill something. This is what he wrote." So saying, Mr. Searcy referred to the following graphic description of a mangrove swamp:—

We had not gone very far when we startled a pheasant from its noontide nap in one of the isolated clumps of trees. A vigorous series of "Poo-hoo-hoo" rang out on the still midday air. The blacks, who are almost preternaturally keen in detecting any abnormality in the natural effect surrounding them, were, doubtless, instantly on the alert, for, although we waited long in the hiding the trees assured us, we had hardly commenced to move from cover when we saw several dusky figures running across the salt marsh into the mangroves. We started in pursuit at a run, but when we reached the camp we found it, as we expected, deserted. The fire was still burning, and the haste in which the blackfellows had left their camp was evidenced by the fact that they had forgotten to take with them what must have been the largest part of their weapons. Boomerangs, spears, throwing sticks, nalahs, shields, and remnants of a half-consumed meal of roasted baobab nuts, were lying about the place. We did not then wait to make a collection of aboriginal curiosities, but, picking up the tracks of the retreating savages, followed them into the mangroves. The successful pursuit of blackfellows in such a tangle of roots and branches was almost as hopeless of achievement as the proverbial search for a needle in a stack of hay; but the chagrin we felt over the defeat of our previous purpose fired our spirits with relentless zeal, and, each selecting a track, we followed the diverging footmarks through the dense, dark, eerie, smelling inferno, with the instinct of sleuth hounds. Nothing will ever obliterate from my memory the impressions that hunt made on my mind. The place seemed to be the very heart of the huge solitude in which we were situated. Overhead there was a dark, closely knitted canopy of leaves. Only here and there a patch of ineffably blue sky, that appeared to be immeasurably distant, gleamed through rifts in the firmament of foliage. Through the apertures the sun shot vertical shafts of golden light that counterfeited gilded pillars, except where their masses were broken by contact with the trunks and limbs of the trees. But the lights that stole through only made the gloom more ghostly and unreal by the contrast. It was like a weird, uncanny underworld, a vast, shapeless vault, whose roof was supported by gnarled and knotted trunks, carved with fantastic devices by the processes of Nature. Slender flying buttresses vaulted away from the trunks in long series of elliptical arches. The whole scheme of design of the jungle might have been that of an unimaginable mediaeval cathedral, conceived in a nightmare and executed in a delirium. It seemed to be peopled by unseen, silent, thinking, feeling beings, capable of action, and the twisted and contorted boughs and branches, stretching out hideous, mud-stained arms, that appeared ever intent on catching and holding one in their loathsome embraces, intensified the impression. The atmosphere was stifling and permeated with a hot, miasmatic vapour. The silence was intense, and broken only by faint sounds of something moving forward, the gasping of shellfish

that lay in the mud or clung to the roots and trunks of the mangroves. So still was it one could almost hear the moisture exuding from the ooze, or the sap coursing in the veins of the trees. But there was a track in the mud, a purpose in my heart, which did not become less insistent as every now and then on ahead I could hear a crack, the sound of a branch pushed aside, and its swishing swing back into place. Nothing was visible. There was no distance, no vista, no perspective, only knotted and twisted trunks, a tangle of boughs and branches and roots, of roots and branches and boughs above, a roof of leaden leaves underfoot, a slushy noisome ooze of decaying leaves, roots, shells, and mud.

"I often read that over and over again. It takes me right back to the tropics, and in fancy I live the old life once more.

#### —Bromli Kites.—

"During the dry season it is marvellous to see the number of bromli kites everywhere. They are great scavengers, and have the cheek of a book agent. They will swoop down and take the food off the plate in front of you. It is well worth watching the way they flash down and catch a piece of food thrown into the air. Where they come from is a mystery. When we were stuck up at Curiosity Peak, mentioned in a previous article, we set fire to the country on the river bank. There was no evidence of a single bird before, but at the first sign of smoke hundreds and hundreds of bromli kites made their appearance, and watched for vermin. I suppose they must have been away aloft, but not visible to the eye.

#### —Flying Foxes.—

"When passing through a belt of mangroves further up the river we started thousands and thousands of flying foxes (evidently the flying wombat of De Rougement). Soon a great eagle appeared on the scene, and having spotted a fine plump fox started to cut it out. Away the victim went, dodging among its fellows. Every now and then we could hear a plaintive cry—as the eagle followed it up. The others did not seem to take the least notice. When the creature was fairly out of the crowd the eagle pounced on it and sailed away. I have never tackled flying fox myself, but by the niggers it is considered a great delicacy, and only old men are allowed to eat it. To convey some idea of the numbers which congregate together, when near Elcho Island on one occasion we saw what we thought to be clouds of smoke. The dense mass turned out to be flying foxes. I can tell you when you get near one of their camping grounds you know it. They are perfect fiends for fruit. I know at times the language at Darwin was three-cornered when it was found that the papayas (pawpaw apple) had been scooped out by the foxes.

#### —Edible Gulls.—

"Before leaving the birds I will give you a little experience we had at the Liverpool



BANYAN TREE, BOTANIC GARDEN, PORT DARWIN.





River in the Fleetwing. We had anchored off Haul Round Island late in the evening and we thought we would have a try for turtle. As soon as we landed, I saw one of the black boys flop down full length on the grass, and up he jumped with a bird in his hand. Seeing fluttering wings in the grass we all started falling on top of them. We soon had a bag of 60 head. The birds proved to be a small black gull. We did not get any turtle. The noise we made was enough to frighten the eggs out of the nest, let alone the live turtle. The Malay cook said the birds were good tucker, so I had them cooked and excellent they proved. This Malay boy I must tell you was the coxswain of the customs gig, and besides acting as cook was also interpreter. Before leaving Darwin he informed me with a long face that the Maccassar man was very bad, and he wanted a little gun to put on his belt. I made him happy with a great Colt I had. I don't think he had it off during the whole trip. It made him an important personage among the Malays.

—Kangaroo Shooting.—

"Some of the most enjoyable sport we had adjacent to Darwin was the kangaroo shooting in the jungles. We generally had a crowd of niggers to beat inside, and we, remaining on the outside, had our shooting as the marsupials broke cover. How I used to enjoy the jungle! I never tired of it. The most delightful time to my idea was in the cool of the early morning, when everything was wet with dew and all was so quiet and still. On one of our expeditions we secured 20 kangaroos—that is, evening

and morning shooting. These were all carted into the township, and, to the great disgust of the butcher (for they are excellent eating), distributed round. We never wasted kangaroo, and it was not an uncommon thing to see it figure on the bill of fare at the hotels. Hunting kangaroo on horseback was followed in Darwin owing to the example set by Mr. J. J. Symes, the leading local solicitor, who at different times imported many dogs for this pastime. It was exciting sport, although difficult, for the country generally was too thickly timbered to be comfortable. I had several turns with Mr. Symes, the last of which I shall remember, for I got a magnificent spill. We were sailing along beautifully when my horse's forelegs disappeared in the ground and I turned several somersaults, but landed unhurt. The accident was caused by a cavity left by the roots of a large tree having been burnt out.

—Port Essington.—

"I shall never forget Port Essington. I had to camp there several times in connection with my work on the coast, so had plenty of time to learn to appreciate the locality. It is a charming place to camp, with good all-round shooting, and fishing into the bargain. Cabbage palms were numerous in the district, so we had a good vegetable at hand—the heart of the head of the tree. In removing this the palm is killed. This growth is not bad eating raw, as I found when out hunting once. We fed on the palm and wild honey."

## ALL ABOUT ALLIGATORS.

### EXCITING EXPERIENCES.

#### No. VIII.

"Three things which I always killed with the greatest satisfaction," said Mr. Searcy in continuing the delightfully interesting account of his experiences in the Northern Territory, "were snakes, sharks, and alligators, and if one gave me greater pleasure than the others, it was doing for the 'gator. Of alligators there is an unlimited supply in the rivers and mangrove creeks on the coast. At one time we used to see a fair number in Darwin Harbour. I dare say they may still be plentiful up some of the quiet creeks. The largest specimen in the Adelaide Museum is one I shot near the baths at Port Darwin. It came fooling round while some

men were bathing. I had two shots, the second one getting hard home, for at low water the carcase was found. The bullet was discovered flattened in the brain pan. What a treat I had to keep that skin and head sweet, for you know in the tropics dead things commence to hum very quickly.

—Lively Alligators.—

"I have reason to remember alligators. On one occasion the niggers brought me in a live specimen about ten feet long, which they had caught in a creek. It seemed well fastened up with ropes, and I put it in the Residency stables until such time as it was

convenient for me to kill and skin it. That brute did have me to be sure. One day it got clear of its lashings, so you can guess we had a picnic to make it secure again, which we did after a great display of energy and cheerful language. We settled accounts next day, and we found 40 eggs inside it. One of my Malay boys cooked some, which he wanted me to try. I passed. He said, 'All same hen eggs'—and so they were in appearance. One of the residents in Darwin, being a bit curious, secured a piece of the gator I shot near the baths. He had it cooked, and eat some. Result—talk about emetics; well, they were not in it with that piece of gator. Another live one, a 12-footer, was brought in by the niggers early one morning. It was well lashed down, and we commenced operations on it. We were proceeding nicely, with great satisfaction to ourselves if not to the alligator, when one of the Malays, in easing off the tail lashings, gave it too much drift. Suddenly there was a windmill display, and the tip of the tail caught me on the side of the head. I did an involuntary fly, and came down on the Malay, who had a sheath knife in his hand, which gave me a nasty gash on the left palm. This the doctor had to stitch up, and I carry the mark to this day. I have no doubt that the alligator fully appreciated the joke, and if his jaws had not been bound up I suppose he would have smiled. We got 30 eggs this time. I expect, if all the little alligators reached the water and lived, the rivers would only contain alligators. The nests are made on the banks, and the eggs hatched by natural heat, and the young ones, like the little turtle, are preyed upon. I remember a man at Southport who had a lot of eggs given to him, which he put away in a drawer, and forgot all about. One evening, hearing a noise, he opened the drawer, and found a lot of little alligators.

#### —Shooting Alligators.—

"The first occasion on which I went up the Daly River I had a 'real good time, for I shot at 26 alligators in one afternoon. How many were killed it was impossible to say, for if you even hit one hard when on the bank the chances are that in its struggles it will slide into the water and sink. Of course, if one had time to wait, the body would come to the surface. On another occasion, when steaming down the river, we sighted 11 big fellows on the bank close together. We made preparations to give them a warm time when the wretched man in charge of the launch became so intent on the alligators that he ran us up on a sandbank about 300 yards from the spot. Before we got off, that man heard several things about himself and his past career that must have astonished him. The largest alligators I have seen were in the Roper. Some, I am certain, were over 20 ft. long. The sensation caused by finding one-

self close to an alligator is certainly not nice. On one occasion our boat was returning from a shooting expedition—we had a large number of birds on board—when it was discovered that two big brutes were close under the stern, keeping up with the craft. I was more comfortable on board the steamer than I would have been in the water. When I was shooting on the Adelaide River, a monster came up within 2 ft. of the boat. I let him have the two barrels right in the face. He must have thought the mosquitoes were bad, at any rate he left.

#### —The Length of Alligators.—

"In the early days of the Roper, so a story goes, a well-known nautical man saw a big fellow on the bank, and with his sextant took a series of angles which made the alligator 35 ft. long. Something wrong in the angles I should think. However, I had reliable information of one being obtained 28 ft. long. The largest dead one I saw was when on our way to Stuart's Tree, on the bank of a small creek about two miles from the memorable landmark. Our attention was first drawn to it by an almighty aroma. We investigated, and at last found the body, which was just 16 ft. long. It had evidently been dead for some time, for it had swollen up to an enormous size. Noticing that it had some splendid teeth, and being a bit of a curiosity fiend, I held the jaws open while my Malay boy pulled them out. It was a powerful undertaking, but I was rewarded. I subsequently had some of the teeth made into match boxes, the largest into a scent bottle. When steaming on the Adelaide once, I had a flying shot at an alligator and turned it over as dead as a doornail. It was close on 10 ft. long. The skin is in Adelaide now. I always used a Martini-Henry military carbine, and found it a really good weapon for the purpose.

#### —Mauled by Alligators.—

"I have seen niggers who had been mauled by alligators. The worst case was on the McArthur. The poor chap had evidently been caught across the ribs, one of which was showing. The Chinese fishermen get caught occasionally. I have heard that the Chinese have no fear of alligators, which are supposed not to touch them, but I do not think that experience bore out this idea. When in the Palmerston on the Roper the Chinese cook would persist in bathing in the river, saying, "Alligator no touch me!" Being a good cook, we were anxious about the celestial, so Capt. Carrington told 'John' if he caught him over the side again he would put him in irons. Otherwise we would have looked upon it as rather an interesting experiment. I will give you a hint—If ever you have the luck to be caught by an alligator, put a finger in each eye. That will have the effect of making it open its jaws, and then you make the most of your opportunity. There are

several known instances of the escape of niggers by that means. Alligators prefer their food high, so the chances are if you are caught you will be deposited on the bottom somewhere. I heard of one nigger escaping even then. When crossing the rivers the niggers carry stout sticks, so if encountered they can ward off the interviewer by shoving the stick down his throat. When on the surface and not moving, an alligator looks for all the world like a log of wood. I have been deceived several times. Many years ago at Port Darwin a police trooper found the difference. Several were bathing off the point at Fort Hill, when the unfortunate fellow swam off to what he thought was a log of wood. The jaws closed on him, and it was all over. The body, I believe, was afterwards picked up on the beach, below the hospital. I dare say some of your old readers will remember the man being taken out of the boat on the Roper by an alligator. Reed, I think, was his name. That they have enormous strength I have evidence, besides my own experience. At Port Essington a buffalo was drinking in a stream when an alligator nailed it by the head and drowned it. Soon afterwards a horse was caught while drinking at the same spot. It dragged the alligator about

40 yards before the brute let go. Mr. Robinson anchored the body of the horse a little distance out from a cliff close to his camp. In due time he had his chance, and the result was a 15-ft. alligator.

—A Matter of Taste.—

"To finish on this point, I must tell you what I saw at Port Essington. Old Jack Davis, an aged Port Essington nigger, was preparing a real good meal. A lot of alligators' eggs had been brought in, the contents of which Jack proceeded to extract—in the same manner we have been told that we can't teach our grandmothers—and to deposit in a basin, which when full was fixed up in a manner peculiar to the natives I suppose. This plan may have been followed to make certain that the eggs were all good. The blacks like savoury things. We found a turtle nest once, and the eggs contained nice little ones. The eggs were opened, the young turtles flicked out, and the balance swallowed. I do not think that I mentioned the dugong before, a great innocent fish, which feeds on weed. The niggers are awfully fond of it. The strange thing about it is, it is difficult to tell the fish from pork. I have eaten it both fried and roasted, and really good it was."

## LIFE OF THE SUB-COLLECTOR.

### SOME OF THE HARD WORK.

#### No. IX.

These articles, which owe their origin to a smoke and a chat, have grown in interest as they have continued. Mr. Alfred Searcy has thrown himself into the subject with enthusiasm, and has spent many hours in research and in working up well-remembered experiences. Several old friends and acquaintances have personally thanked the Acting Clerk of the House of Assembly for his reminiscences.

—A Letter of Thanks.—

Quite recently Mr. Searcy received the following letter from a well-known gentleman in one of the banks whom he has never met:—"I have read with great pleasure your most interesting experiences appearing under 'In Northern Seas' in The Register. Please allow me to thank you for what I consider has been a perfect treat. Twelve months ago I returned from Port Darwin, where I was stationed in our office for three years. The many fascinations of the tropical life have made me feel a very

strong desire to return to our most interesting and undoubtedly rich tropical settlement; and I hope some day I shall be asked to go there again. Your interesting accounts have reminded me of some short trips taken inland and down the coast, and have given me a thirst for more extensive journeys in that part. Mr. Gunn's description of the mangrove swamp is grand. I was at Darwin when he came up, accompanied by Mrs. Gunn, en route for the Elsey Station. A few months later I called upon Mrs. Gunn at the Hotel Victoria to offer my sympathy in her dreadful bereavement. She became so infatuated with the lovely charm of the bush life that she said she thought she would never be happy in a city again. Mrs. Gunn was a well-known Melbourne lady. Again please allow me to thank you for something that has given me great pleasure, and brought to me reminiscences that create a desire within me to live the many pleasant times over again that I spent in the Territory."

—Hard Work as well as Sport.—

"It must not be supposed," continued Mr. Searcy, "that my work on the north coast was by any means always pleasant and smooth, and that there was nothing to do but shoot, hunt, and fish. When on duty we had to undergo many inconveniences, dangers, and hardships, to say nothing of the real hard work to be undertaken. When I could I always went in for a bit of sport if it did not interfere with my work. The responsibilities were great, and the action I on occasions had to take was of necessity high-handed. In fact, the term piratical has been used in connection with what I did; but as I never got into trouble I suppose my actions were justified.

—The Flying Cloud.—

"The first cruise I made on the coast was in the Flying Cloud, and I shall ever remember the many weeks I spent on board of the old craft. She was a cutter of just 28 tons. Old Portonians will remember her well, I expect. The Flying Cloud was built by G. Foulles at Port Adelaide in 1870. Capt. Marsh left Port Adelaide in charge of her on October 9, 1872, and he arrived in Port Darwin on December 2 of the same year. Shortly afterwards Capt. Marsh proceeded to the Roper River with stores. Upon his return to Port Darwin he was sent to Timor, where he was joined by the Hon. Thomas Reynolds, who was a passenger in the Flying Cloud back at Port Darwin. Capt. Marsh made a trip to Sourabaya, one of the towns in Java, for the purpose of engaging a crew. After that the cutter was engaged in general Government work along the coast. No doubt Capt. Henry R. Marsh will be well remembered by old residents of Port Adelaide, out of which port he sailed for some years. I have just received a letter from the old man, who is now a resident of Sydney, and is well over 80 years of age. He states that he was apprenticed at 14 years of age to the firm of Majoribanks & Co. He goes on to say—'As it is 70 years ago I cannot remember the address, but it was close to the Mansion House. The first three years and six months I was in a sperm whaler. For the rest of the time I was in one of old Thomas Coutts's vessels, of 1,565 tons, trading to Bombay and China and back to England. I was engaged as mate of the Gulnare; I think it was in 1870. Capt. Douglas (the first Government Resident) and family were passengers in the boat to Port Darwin. It was a miserable trip.' Capt. Marsh was a splendid navigator, and a thorough seaman of the old school. This fact was recognised by all the masters of the magnificent steamers calling at Port Darwin, where the captain was harbourmaster for many years. Capt. Marsh was over a quarter of a century in the Northern Territory. Now to return to the Flying Cloud. When steam was finally introduced at Port Darwin it was considered her work, as far as the Govern-

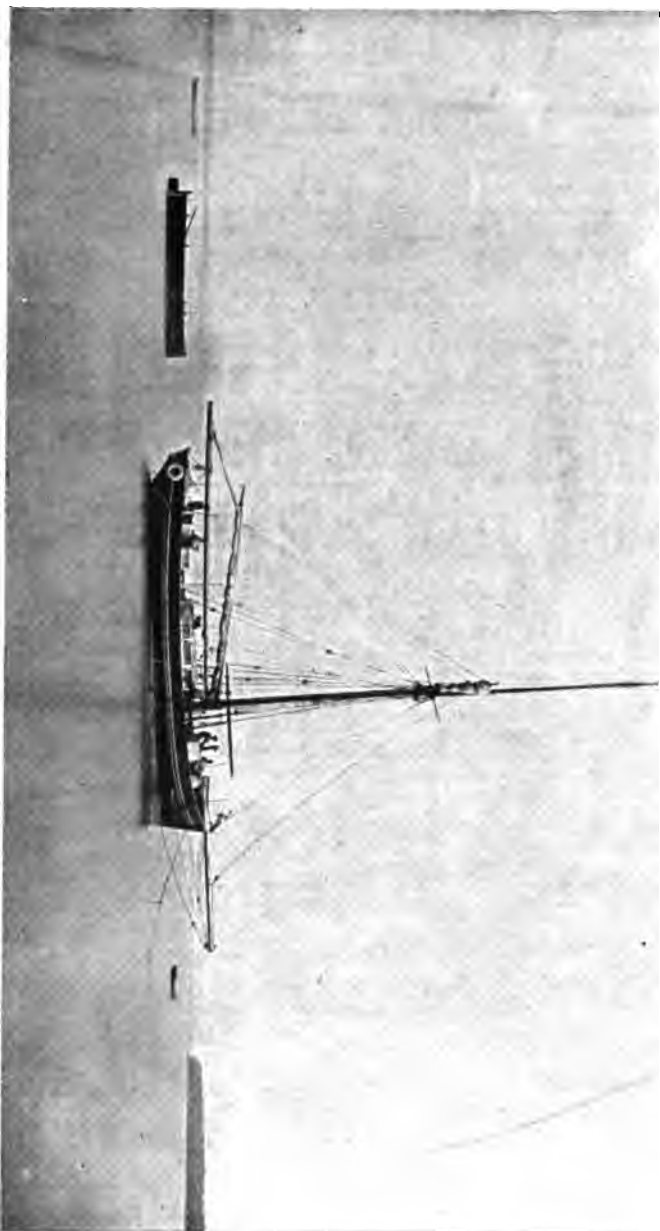
ment was concerned, was done. She was sold to some Japanese, who were fitting her up with a view of pearling in her. This work was just nearing completion when a storm arose, and the poor old 'Cloud' made her last voyage—to the beach—where she quickly broke up. I afterwards found her main beam, on which was carved the legend 27 82 over 100, 64.199, which, being interpreted, meant her tonnage and official number. I cut it out as a souvenir, and it now hangs in my den at home. It was a great blow to Capt. Marsh to have to leave the old boat. He had made her his home for many years.

—Rats and Cockroaches.—

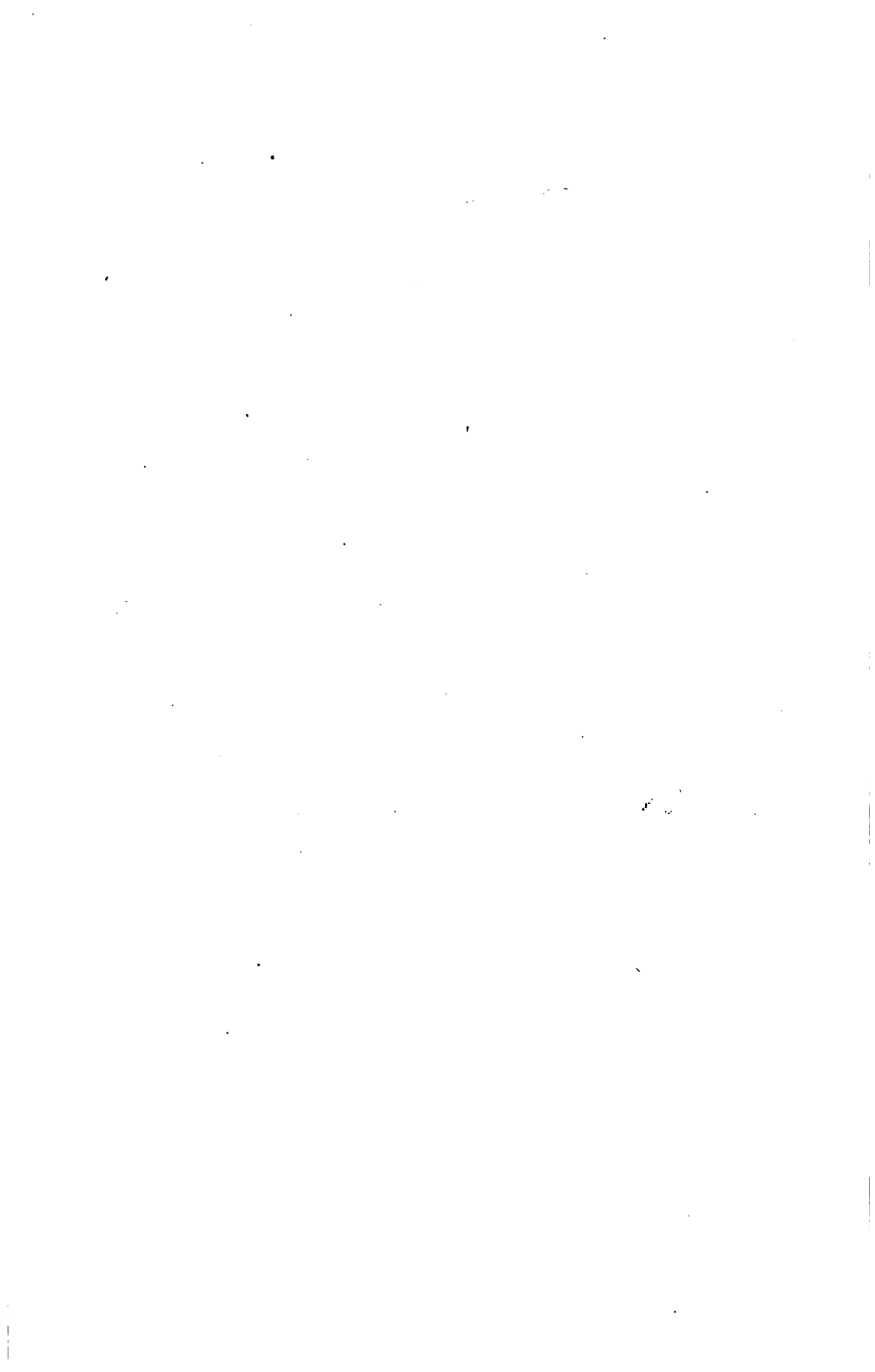
"The Flying Cloud was a capital seaboard, but as a residence for a lengthened period she had drawbacks, for she was chock-a-block with cockroaches and rats. Many means were tried to get rid of the pests, even to pumping the old 'Cloud' full of water, but the vermin were soon as bad as ever. You are aware, no doubt, that the tropical cockroaches grow to a great size, and are full of business. An immense fellow sailed in to my room at our quarters one night, and on examining it I found a great number of tick fastened upon the stomach portion of its body. You may have heard that these insects have a great predilection for finger and toe nails. When in the 'Cloud' asleep I had my toenails nibbled right down to the quick. The rats on board were beastly familiar. They often made one's body the means of reaching the deck as quickly as possible. I woke up one night, and found a great brute seated on my face. The old skipper was death on cockroaches by means of a round piece of leather on the end of a pliant stick. When he was in his little cabin you could hear the flop as regularly as clockwork. He flopped to some purpose, for he became a dead shot.

—A Long Pull.—

"A little experience we had in the Cloud gave me my first taste of a long pull. We had been into Trepan Bay to have a look at the local trepang fishers' camp, and Capt. Marsh having to proceed to Bowen Straits with stores for a party of timber cutters dropped us (Robinson, Pinder, myself, and two niggers) outside Port Essington in a small boat. We made a start at 8 a.m. with a 20-mile pull ahead of us to reach Victoria, that being the name of the old settlement at the head of the harbour. When about three miles from the entrance of the port it came on to blow a gale from the south-east right off the land. A nasty sea was soon raised. There was nothing for it, but to lay our ears back and pull, and a nice doing we had. To make things more cheerful we found that one of our oars was badly sprung. So we had to use it tenderly. At last we managed to make Port Smith, the eastern side of the entrance to the port, and landed for a well-



THE CUTTER "FLYING CLOUD."



deserved rest, and with upwards of 15 miles yet to pull. To our great disgust we found that the tin of meat we had with us was not edible. So it was a case of drinking water and looking happy. At 10 o'clock at night we reached Robinson's camp, fairly famished; but Robinson's eggs, bacon, and bottled beer also looked famished by the time we felt ourselves again.

#### —The Fleetwing.—

"The first steamer I used on the coast was the Fleetwing. She was a screw steamer of 21 tons, 18 h.p. In her we experienced out-and-out real hard work. We left Darwin with only 30 cwt. of coal, all we could procure. We used coal to reach Port Essington, the balance being reserved in case of an emergency. So for the future wood had to be cut and shipped. At Port Essington it was comparatively easy, for we made use of the niggers, who were accustomed to handle the axe. The steamer was a regular fireeater in the way of wood. She consumed somewhere about 6 tons a day. With the first lot taken on board we just managed to make the Malay camps at the Goulburn Islands (Mungaroda). The only timber available here was mangrove in a big swamp, about half a mile away from the beach. It was hard work to cut it, the axemen having to stand on the slimy roots to get at the trunks. The Malays being in camp, there were a great number of niggers about, and I engaged some 30 of them to carry the wood down to the beach, whence it was boated to the steamer. I paid the niggers with tobacco and pipes.

#### —A Surgical Operation.—

"Noticing that one of them was limping badly, I made enquiries and found he had run a sharp piece of coral into his heel. I judged that a portion of it evidently remained. The blackfellow was soon on the ground and his foot in my possession. I immediately sank a shaft through the thick skin, struck coral, and removed it. I always carried the necessary tools for this sort of work with me.

#### —Timber for Fuel.—

"Green and dry mangrove mixed made splendid steaming fuel. In the pearly boats on the coast they always use the red mangrove, because it does not create smoke, and when cut fairly small does not emit sparks. We were very lucky in connection with our next timber-getting performance. This was at the Malay camping place at Entrance Island, Liverpool River (Lee Monie Monie). We found that the Malays had before leaving collected a splendid stock of timber in readiness for their next visit, I suppose. It is said that necessity knows no law; so I, to use a later-day term, 'commandeered' it. It was a decided chuck in, as the wood only wanted cutting in half. It is perhaps just as well that I did not hear what the Malays had to

say on the matter upon their return. Their language was no doubt tropical, as all this timber had to be brought from the mainland, and that at great trouble.

#### —Bad Niggers.—

"The niggers also had to be reckoned with, for they have a bad name on this portion of the coast. The steamer was anchored in five fathoms, close in to a beautiful sandy beach, backed up by a delightful glade of some acres in extent covered with short grass, with a charming belt of jungle growth beyond. It was one of the most perfect camping places I visited. We obtained a splendid supply of grand water at a shallow depth on the beach. At Oadell Straits we had our next turn at woodcutting. There were a great number of niggers here, but there were no women among them, which was a bad sign. After considerable trouble the boys we had brought from Port Essington managed to get the better of their suspicions, so I at once engaged a number to help in the timber getting. Fortunately two of our party were expert axemen; in fact, one had been a cedar cutter in Queensland, so the trees soon commenced to fall. I worked with the carriers. Here is an idea of what fools men are. I had given instructions to the men in the bush that on no account were they to lay aside their firearms. After having been absent for a short time I returned and found that they had slung their revolvers and carbines on a small tree, and were working at about 50 yards from them. I can tell you they heard of it. The niggers have a playful habit of dragging their spears through the grass with their toes, and all the while looking as innocent as it is possible for them to look. If the niggers had only thought of it they might have given the cutters a warm time. Close to where we skipped the timber was a fine stream of water pouring out of a hole in a large rock. The niggers gave us to understand that it was always there. When we first came together the niggers displayed great curiosity, thoroughly inspecting us and our clothes. One man evidently thought I was a good subject, and overhauled me properly. When he came to the revolver he touched it, threw his arms around, and said 'Boom,' 'Boom,' 'Boom'—he had evidently been in touch with civilization.

#### —Aground in Cadell Straits.—

"After taking in fuel we started to steam through the straits, and when near the east end the water shoaled rapidly, so anchored. When passing through the narrowest part of the straits we grounded, but after a time we managed to get over the bank. Being aware that the chart showed one fathom about here, I had the curiosity to look to see if it was the spot where we grounded. Upon looking at the chart, I found the sounding had been scratched out. It was not the cook who



did that. I have the chart to this day. The 'old man' went sounding for a channel while it was light, but was not successful in finding it. During the night it came on to blow furiously from the south-east, and the rain poured in torrents. This continued for nearly three days. So you can imagine we had a cheerful time on board, for we were 17 all told. There was next to no shelter. We aft had a wooden sieve, otherwise a deckhouse, with four

bunks, which were occupied in turn. The men forward rigged up a sail as well as they could. By the time it cleared up everything was wet and mouldy. Prompted by curiosity, I suppose, some niggers came off to us in a canoe, and from them the information was gained that the proas always kept close to the mainland. Upon investigation we found a splendid channel, carrying plenty of water, so we were soon under way again."

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## EXCITING CRUISES.

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### ADVENTURES BY SEA AND LAND.

#### No. X.

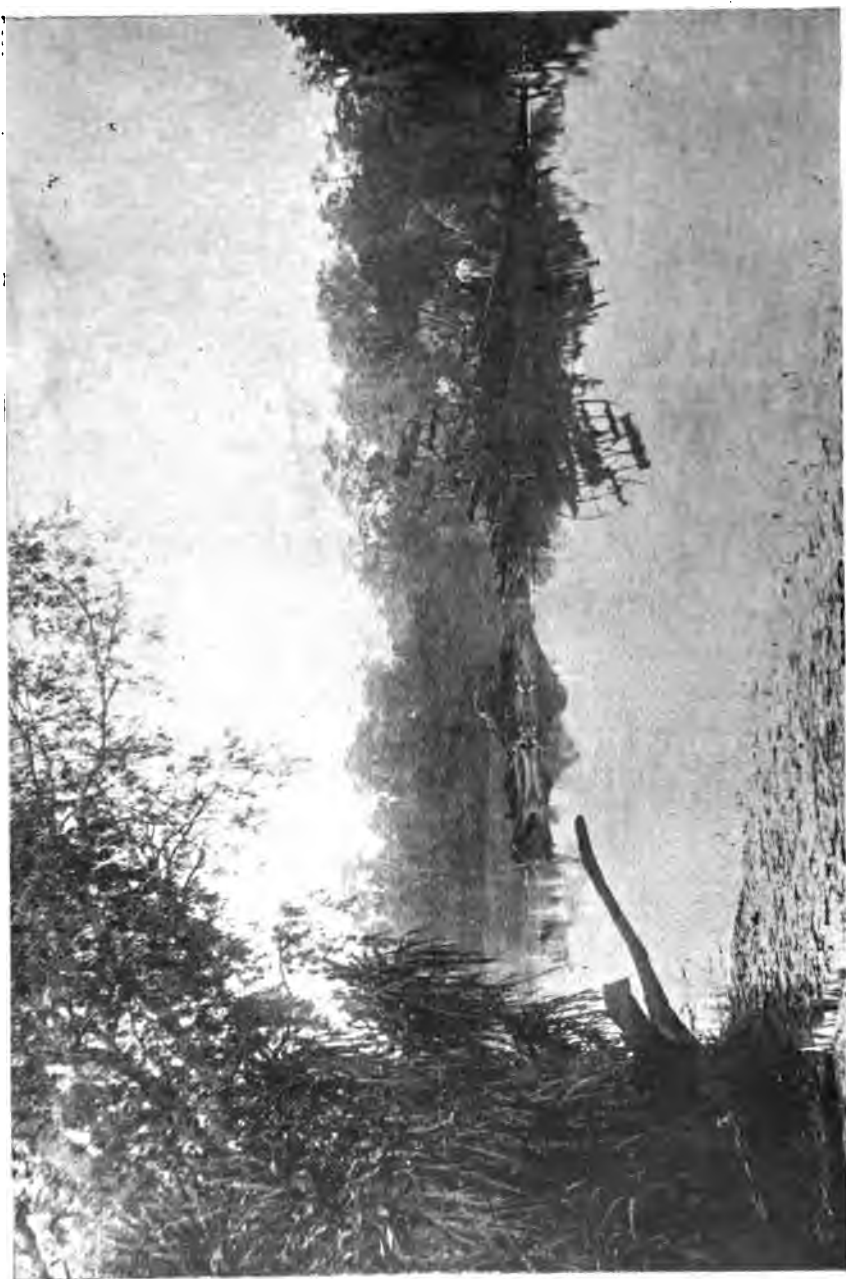
"The next place at which we secured timber," continued Mr. Searcy, "was Cotton Island, one of the English Company's islands. We landed on a beach close to a dense growth of casuarina trees. Work was soon started on these, when down came showers of green ants. Now, when a green ant attacks you you know it, because it hangs on most tenaciously. These insects have one good feature, however; they are not venomous. You find these delights of the bush everywhere in the Territory. They build their nests in the trees by fixing leaves together, generally at a convenient height to knock against. If you do come in contact with them it is just as well to make yourself scarce. This particular place made me think of a book I had read many years before called 'The Coral Island.' There seemed to be something familiar about the surroundings. The remains of a proa or a very large dredging canoe were lying close at hand. The tide here was tremendous, and it made the boating of the timber very difficult. We started the boat about half a mile above where the steamer was anchored, and it was gradually swept down. It was a case of standing by when nearing the steamer. The boat on one occasion missed the vessel, and a nice picnic it was getting her back. While at anchor the steamer had about 18 in. of foam up the stem. A little further to the eastward was Malay Road, where Flinders first discovered the proas.

#### —A Pretty Spot.—

"Upon the way to Cotton Island we called in at the camping place at Mallison Island (Lamba Cheepa), and when wandering over the rocks there we struck a remarkably pretty little scene. There was

a basin of perhaps 20 yards in diameter full of water, left by the receding tide. It was about 2 or 3 fm. deep, and the water was as clear as crystal. The bottom was a perfect transformation scene, containing beautiful coral and seaweeds of various colours, while fish of many hues were swimming about. It was a dream of beauty and peacefulness. I often think if the kodak had been in vogue then what a splendid lot of pictures I might have obtained. From Cotton Island we went to Melville Bay, where we procured our timber without much trouble. I noticed at the Malay camping place a stack of what turned out to be manganese, which the Malays informed me they took to Macassar, but I could not learn the reason why. I had with me a number of small looking glasses for presentation to the niggers. This is where I had my talk with Cadado, the chief mentioned in a previous article. I gave that gentleman and each of his staff a glass, and then the fun commenced. The aborigines never tired of looking into the mirrors, each wondering at something he had never realized before—what an ordinary lot the other fellows were. I was well repaid for my thoughtfulness. From Melville Bay we turned round, and had a repetition of the timber cutting until Darwin was reached. Our 'old man' was a bit of a character. He evidently thought that the place for everything, as far as he was concerned, was his bunk. If a tooth or hair brush, revolver, or, in fact, anything was missed the cry was 'Look in the old man's bunk,' and sure enough there it would be found, mixed up with blankets, oilskins, seaboots, and other fixings peculiar to a seafaring life. The old chap would have made a good subject for a sketch by W. W. Jacobs.





WRECK OF THE YOUNG AUSTRALIAN, ROPER RIVER.

—Cruise in the Palmerston.—

"One of the most important cruises I had was in the Palmerston, with the late Capt. Carrington in command. Capt. Carrington was a splendid fellow and a great favourite. I shall ever remember the six weeks we were together. We had a bad time until we reached the Gulf of Carpentaria, for the nor-west monsoon was in full swing. In the rivers it was hot and muggy, with mosquitoes galore. After overhauling several proas we arrived off the mouth of the Roper, having called at Grote Island, where we landed and endeavoured to make our way inland towards some fires, but could not get through on account of the dense growth. At the mouth of the river Capt. Carrington had the steamlaunch sounding for the channel; so, taking advantage of the opportunity, I put over the topline, and was rewarded by a fine haul of fish, strange to me, but good eating.

—The Young Australian.—

"When steaming up the river we passed the wreck of the steamer Young Australian, a vessel sent up by the South Australian Government to assist in landing the stores and material for the overland line, when Mr. (now Sir Charles) Todd went to the Roper in 1870 or 1871 in the Omeo. The Young Australian was engaged in lightering the steamer. I think it was in 1872 that she was wrecked. When I saw her the ribs and frames of the paddle wheels were still on the rocks. As we passed a very large alligator came from the centre of the wreck and disappeared in the water. I passed the wreck many times afterwards, and on every occasion saw an alligator there. I might mention that my comrade in many of the cruises, Mr. H. Pinder, was an officer on board the Young Australian, having sailed in her from Port Adelaide. About 1873 Mr. Pinder crossed over from Beltana to the Territory with sheep. When near a branch river called the Hodgson we grounded on a sandbank. The steamer came off during the night, and swung into the trees on the bank, crashing among the overhanging branches. We were all sleeping on the poop in nets. I did not rouse out when I heard the noise; but I think if I had known what I learnt in the morning, that a broken branch was sticking right into my net just above my breast, I would have been out quick and lively.

—Seizure of the Good Intent.—

"We eventually anchored about three miles from Leichhardt's Bar. We went on to the bar in the steamlaunch, where I had a surprise, for I found the ketch Good Intent, and upon boarding her I learned that she had cleared from Normanton for Darwin with a general cargo, consisting of stores, tobacco, and spirits. The broad arrow was quickly placed on one of the masts, and she was seized in the Queen's name. I arrested two of the crew, who had stood by her. I might say at once that, want-

ing men to look after the boat, I gave them the option of standing their trial for being concerned in smuggling or of working on board at a fair wage. They considered discretion the better part of valour, and decided on the latter course. The men subsequently appeared as witnesses in the case against the owner. It transpired that the owner of the ketch and his wife were landed at the McArthur with stores and material to build a store. I seized all the station stores landed at the Roper, but afterwards released them upon payment of fines and duties. At the 'Bar' there was a store, and, needless to say, at that period it was not licensed. That, however, did not stop the sale of grog. All the cattle from Queensland for the Territory used to come by way of the Roper, so you can understand with whom the trade was done. Not far from the shanty was the grave of Charley Johnston. The tree under which the grave was still bore the graphic epitaph—'C. H. J. Murdered by the natives, 28/8/75.' The day after our arrival a man came in from the McArthur to take charge of the Good Intent, he having been sent by the owner for that purpose. He came a day too late.

—Wild Life and Strange Characters.—

"Many a strange tale could be told of the life and doings on the back blocks, and the extraordinary characters met with at a place like the Roper, which was looked upon as a sanctuary for the rest of the States. There were no police within many hundreds of miles, no telegraph nearer than the overland line, and no mail service. I met many peculiar fellows, but I must say that when once they realized that I was not a policeman, but merely a customs officer, I was well treated, and spent many an hour listening to their yarns and experiences. Many I met were on the cross. The man who came with the 'best of intentions,' but did not live up to them, reported that a man had committed suicide at Rosie Creek, about 30 miles from the Limmen River. It appeared that the deceased had been drinking, had fever, and was wanted by the Queensland police. In fact, it was stated that the policeman, a determined fellow, had followed the man across the border, swum the McArthur, and was close on his quarry, when—a concatenation of circumstances influenced the poor chap to decide 'it were better not to be.' On the Sunday the proprietor of the store invited us all to a picnic at Mount McMin, distant about 12 miles. Just as we had saddled up a party of six men came in to buy stores, and purposed staying just two hours. Who and what the men were we did not enquire. Our party was just upon starting when the man in charge of the store said to his boss, 'You are a fool to go away; there is a century sticking out here.' The thoughtful man then invited the new arrivals to have a glass of rum. Five of them agreed, and the next thing I saw was 30 o.p. rum

disappearing. The thoughtful man had previously told me that it was 30 o.p., as he had tested it. Upon my asking to see his hydrometer, he cut off a small piece of bacon fat, dropped it into a glass of the rum, and the fat went to the bottom like a stone, the man remarking that that was the way he always tested the strength of spirits. Being satisfied with the simple and to me cleaner instrument, Sykes's hydrometer, I did not enter into any arguments as to the why and wherefore, but that the thoughtful man was right as to the strength of the spirits was proved by the sequel. When we left a week afterwards the party were still there, apparently not having satisfied their desire for stores. Perchance the century was realized. While a man could satisfactorily answer a simple question, no impediments were put in the way of his purchasing powers. I never saw money of any sort on the rivers, all payments being made by cheque, and some very extraordinary ones would change hands. Many were in a very queer state by the time they reached the bank. The sailor men of our party cause the overlanders considerable amusement by the way they looked after the steering gear and saw that the saddles had good rolling chocks. We had a good time at the picnic, passing through 'Hell's Gate' en route. When returning our packhorse fell and broke its shoulder. It came on to rain heavily, but this did not seem to affect the fun at 'the Bar,' which was fast and furious. Shooting at bottles, kip, bumblepeg, and racing were in full swing. I had a race on my nag against a man on foot, and was beaten. We had a little experience at the McArthur, the result of shanty life. A man had been at the Roper having a good time. He desired to get to the McArthur, and his cheque not being exhausted he had to take the balance out in watoches. He came into our camp at night, and tripping over a tentpeg went head over heels into the river. When fished out he was none the worse for his ducking, but the watoches were sick. Many of the men in the back blocks have nicknames. Two chaps at the Roper I remember were called respectively 'the Gutter Snipe' and 'the Queensland Orphan.' One was afterwards killed by the niggers, and the other was well known in the Northern Territory.

#### —Cattle Duffing.—

"One of the men present afterwards distinguished himself greatly when the Kimberley rush was on in 1886, and there was a constant stream of overlanders to that place, the route being over Settlement Creek, the McArthur, the Roper, thence to the Elsie and onwards. The man mentioned settled on one of the cattle stations at the bottom of the gulf. He built himself yards and a shanty, and ran in cattle, which he killed and sold to the travellers. All this was done without the permission of the

station people. The butchering business was thriving when the manager stepped in and expostulated. He was informed that he could buy out the butchering business if he liked. Anyway it was stopped, so I suppose some arrangement was come to. This reminds me of another little bit of killing business which took place on a station in the gulf country. Two men called at the station, were well received, and treated with great kindness. When leaving they were given a good supply of salt meat. To show their gratitude, soon after leaving the homestead they shot a beast, cut out a piece of the rump, and left the balance.

#### —Good Fellows.—

"I trust I have not conveyed the idea that all the men we met at the rivers were of the class mentioned. From my personal experience I knew nothing against a single one, unless smuggling is considered a crime, which many doubt. But one can form an idea, and I am certain, with few exceptions, the men I met were good, honest, and hard working, although perhaps it might have been as well for a clean skin to fight shy of some of them. Having a spree was regarded as only natural when the chance arose. The boss of the store was a proper rough diamond, having seen little else but life in the back blocks. He was a thorough horseman and bushman, and keen to make money in his own way (in which he was not peculiar), but as generous and good-hearted a fellow as you could wish to meet. That was my experience of him. Poor old chap, he is dead now! Talking about bushmen reminds me of a man I had as a fellow-passenger in the Active. I do not believe he had ever seen the sea before. Soon after leaving the McArthur we got a proper dusting, and the little steamer seemed as if she would roll her inside out. The chap mentioned when in the throes of enjoying himself said to the skipper, 'Oh, captain, can't you hobble her out.' When the Palmerston was up at the Roper landing we required some fresh meat; so arrangements were accordingly made, and a mob of cattle were driven down alongside the steamer. A beast was shot, and I would not like to swear that it was not a clean skin. Some choice morsels were ordered to be put aside for use in the cabin, but the Chinese crew seemed to have a predilection the same way, and the cabin came off second best. Didn't poor old Carrington perform! A number of niggers were camped on the other side of the river. I was informed that they were not allowed across without permission, and, when given this, had to wear a tin plate slung round the neck. It was bad for the health of one crossing without the badge."





BEACH ON ROPER RIVER.

## CRUISE OF THE PALMERSTON.

### PIONEERING ON THE McARTHUR.

#### No. XI.

"While we were at the 'Bar,' " continued Mr. Searcy, "a man expressed a wish for a myall nigger boy. Somebody undertook to secure him one. The morning we were leaving I saw the man who made the promise overhauling his Queensland boys' revolvers. Some time afterwards the party returned, dragging a boy of about 15 years with them. The man who was anxious for the myall black refused to take delivery of him. I fancy he got scared at the high-handed business. The look of contempt and disgust on the Queensland boys' faces was really very suggestive. We did not hear the remarks of their boss. When Mr. Hingston, the surveyor, had finished his work surveying a township at the Bar, with the Good Intent in tow, we steamed to Gulnare Bluff, where, I think, the surveyor had to fix up another township. For what reason it is difficult to say. I know he had a lot of work to do in swamp and water.

#### —An Aboriginal Dwelling.—

"While at work one day Mr. Hingston found an aboriginal dwelling, which revealed evidences of architectural design seldom displayed by Australian aborigines. It was evidently a main camping depot, oval in shape, about 16 ft. long and 14 ft. high. It was built of layers of straw intermixed with good stiff clay. Small openings as windows were numerous all round the sides. The door was the only drawback. This was a mere burrow hole about 1 ft. from the ground, and one was compelled to crawl in on all fours to enter this primitive type of mansion. When we cleared the river we anchored at Maria Island. Seeing some blacks on the beach we went to interview them. They were apparently frightened, however, and abandoned the canoes on which they were at work, and cleared into the bush. Care was taken not to interfere with their possessions, and pipes and tobacco were left where the niggers could find them. Rambling about we came upon an open space of considerable extent marked out in large squares with stones on which were planted, 3 to 5 ft. high, five or six hollow posts, which were stuffed full of human bones. All the posts were painted red. We doubtless had stumbled upon a sacred spot. There were some nice skulls, but not a thing was interfered with. We eventually reached the Pellew Group, off the McArthur, and anchored as near the mouth as possible. On our way through the islands we discovered the Malay camp-

ing place—Denna Seeda—where four proas were at work.

#### —Up the McArthur.—

"As soon as arrangements were completed we started up the river, the party consisting of Capt. Carrington, J. P. Hingston, Arthur H. J. Ferguson (now of the Customs Department, Port Adelaide), myself, and the men of the surveying party. With the crew included there was a considerable crowd. We towed up a ship's boat laden with our camp fixings and provisions. A few miles up the river we struck a big camp of niggers, but they cleared into the bush as soon as they caught sight of us. We waited some time at the camp, and the blacks returned satisfied that we did not intend mischief. The usual presents of tobacco and pipes were given, and they were received with the greatest satisfaction. Indeed, we became perfect friends for the time being. To seal the friendship—or perchance it may have been the nigger fashion of 'Looking towards you'—a great buck came to me with a wooden vessel, shaped like a canoe, in his hand, and full of honey. I noticed on the top a ball of grass. The chap held the honey to me, but I shook my head, so he took the ball of grass, whicked it about in the syrup, and popped it into his mouth. After sucking it dry he put it back into the honey, and when nicely soaked offered it to me again. He evidently wished me to follow his example, but I passed. There was a fine iguana in the fire just nicely cooked. This I did try, and it was really good—just like chicken.

#### —A Sturdy Pioneer.—

"About 25 miles above the mouth we found Mr. William McLeod camped on the bank. He was surrounded by the goods he had taken up to start a store at the McArthur River. He had arrived from Normanston in the Lucy and Adelaide schooner about six weeks previously, and that vessel being unable to proceed further up had left him here. McLeod was an old pioneer, both of the Territory and Queensland, so being 'marooned' did not trouble him much. He had set a couple of men he had with him to cut timber for the purpose of constructing a punt, and had sat down complacently to guard his belongings from encroachments by the blacks. Nor was this a sinecure, as the niggers had made one raid on McLeod. 'But,' he re-



marked, 'they didn't stop long. I had just time to fire six shots, and they said good day.' There was a deal of suggestiveness in the short speech. That event had happened three weeks before. I said, 'By the way, McLeod, I am anxious to get a good skull,' but he replied, 'No you don't; they are all in the river.' I must tell you that arrangements had been made with the Queensland authorities to collect duties for all goods going from the Gulf or Thursday Island to the McArthur until an officer was stationed there. Before leaving Darwin I had received the duties on McLeod's cargo, about £370, so you can form some idea of the quantity and nature of it. Subsequently, when the Kimberly rush was on, the Western Australian authorities arranged for me to do the same at Darwin for goods going to Wyndham. I therefore collected the first duties on goods entering that port. After 'looking towards' McLeod several times we cleared.

#### —The Owner of the Good Intent.—

"Just before sunset we arrived at the store the owner of the Good Intent had built on the bank of the river about 20 miles above McLeod's camp. When at the River I was warned that I might have trouble at the McArthur, because the man I wanted was looked upon as a real hard case, and that if a crowd of overlanders and backblockers happened to be present things would be made lively, for it was remarked that they would hardly give up all the liquor without a strong protest. In anticipation of this I took on all the men of the survey party as glut customs officers. In fact, the opinion was freely expressed that when my little game was understood I would stand a splendid chance of getting a bullet. I must own that I felt a little bit like I did when I first visited a theatre. Fully intending, however, to have a say if there was trouble, I had my revolver half-drawn as I led the way up the bank. Fortunately, and to my great relief, there were only the owner, his wife, and one other man at the store. You must understand that at such places the population is entirely floating. I immediately intimated to the owner and his wife that they were my prisoners, and seized the store and contents as contraband, likewise the stores landed for several stations. The latter upon payment of duties and fines were afterwards released. Directly I entered the store I was struck with the extreme neatness of everything. It was easy to see a woman's hand had been there. The counter was made of a galvanized iron case, the shelves were empty cases piled up, and all covered with clean newspapers, and the man and his wife were as spic and span as if they had been settled in a city instead of at that extreme outpost of civilization. I must own that I could not help feeling sorry for them. The wife was a splendid woman, and as good a bushwoman as you would wish to meet. The following day a very

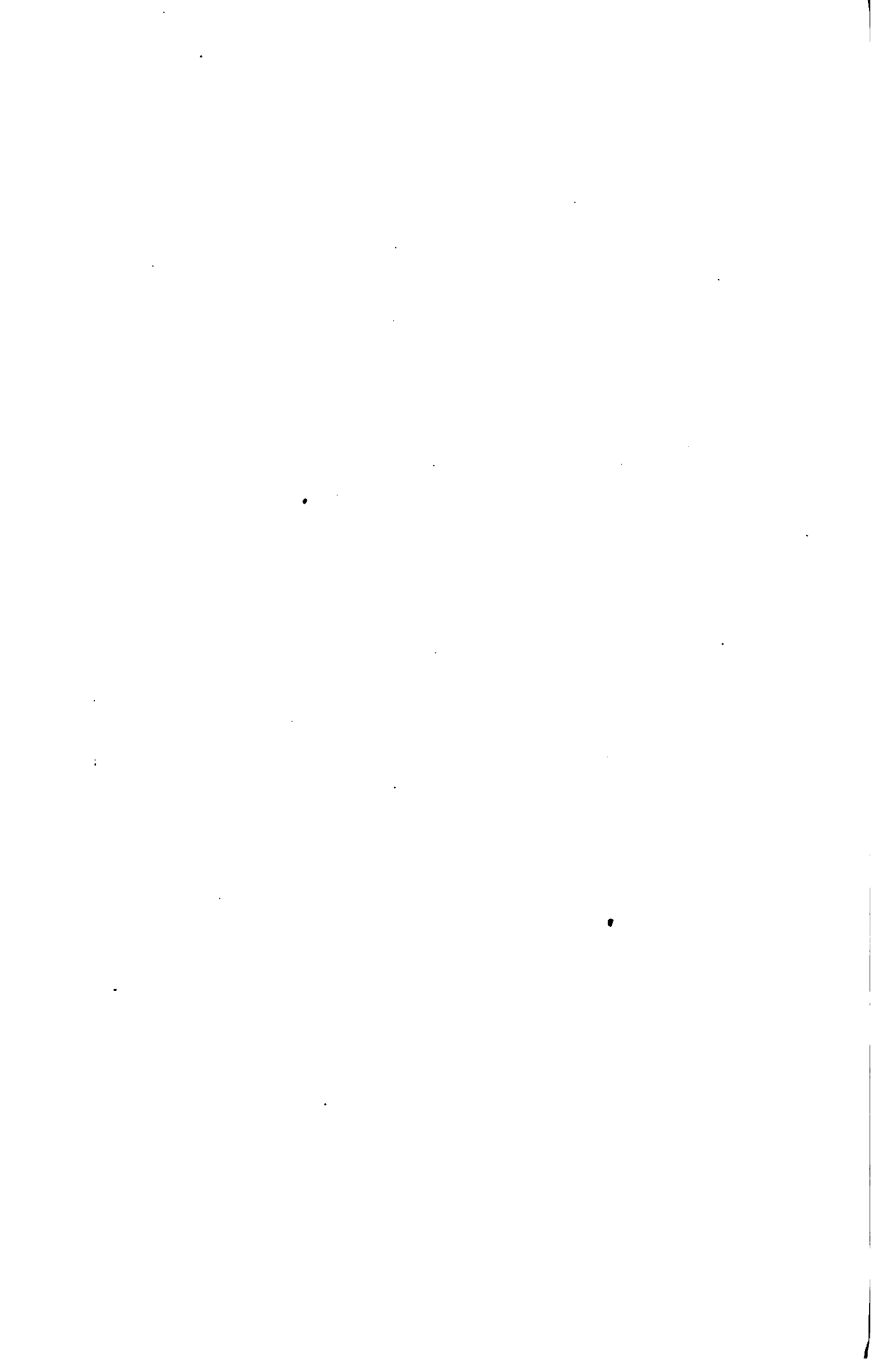
large mob of cattle arrived en route with the usual number of men in attendance. They had been for many months on the road, and had looked forward to a real good time at the McArthur, so you can form some idea of their supreme disgust at finding a beastly customs officer in possession. The way some of them came and leant over the counter and gazed reproachfully at me, with never a word, was really touching. The men soon had what they wanted, and I gave them a helping hand. It seemed that my man had built a large punt out of contraband timber. This McLeod had desired to purchase very badly, but the owner was not taking any. He did not want any competition, so had put on a prohibitive price—I think it was £500. Wishing to lend McLeod a helping hand, as he had paid up like a man, I gave my prisoner the option of selling the punt to McLeod at a reasonable figure, in which case he could keep the money, or of my taking it to Darwin, which would be the last he would see of it. The man decided to sell, so old McLeod soon commenced getting his cargo up, Capt. Carrington hiring the launch to him, when it was not otherwise employed, to tow the punt. Soon everybody was satisfied except the original owner. Whatever my man was, or had been, one could not help admiring his pluck and grit in pushing his way to unfrequented and almost unknown places. The day after the arrest, to my satisfaction, the prisoners were placed on board the Palmerston and the Good Intent taken up the river as far as she could go with safety, to receive the seized goods. Everything was taken, even to the framework and iron of the store.

#### —Hot Work.—

"We camped at the McArthur for about 10 days, during which time Mr. Hingston surveyed a township, and it was decided to call it Borroloola, which I understood meant fresh or running water. We had an awful time, for the heat was intense. To give you an idea—the surveyor wanted another day to finish his work, and as we were all anxious to get away he asked me to go with him and give him a hand cutting pegs. It was Sunday. We made an early start, and after some four miles' walk commenced operations. As the day advanced the heat became unbearable. It made your eyebrows crawl. So after about an hour at the peg cutting I assured the surveyor that I had grasped all I desired to know about the profession, and was quite competent to occupy any position in connection with it. So I started back to the camp on my own, and I was thankful indeed to reach it. Early in the afternoon the others commenced to come in, but not together by any means. Two of the men were so exhausted that they did not re-



A PORT DARWIN MALE ABORIGINAL.



turn until evening, having rested under a tree. It being the wet season, we were worried by innumerable creeping crawling things, particularly at night. The language used by Capt. Carrington and the surveyor was very fine, for they had to take sights at night, and chasing stars over an artificial horizon with your eyes, nose, and ears full of insects, to say nothing of others drifting down your back, was not conducive to good temper. By perseverance, I can't say patience, good sights were obtained, and the position of the township fixed. I visited an object of interest a few miles above our camp—the tree marked by the explorer, Ernest Favenc, some six years before. While going up and down the river we sighted hundreds of kangaroo, but the bird life at that time of the year was scarce.

#### —Back Blockers.—

Several of the outstation people came in, and we gave them a day on board the steamer. There were some real back-blocker chaps, who donned new moleskins for the occasion, but they did not trouble to take the paper off the buttons. On our way down of course it was necessary to stop at McLeod's camp to get something to clear the bronchial tubes. There was one great Scotchman among the party, who said, when I asked him what his poison was, "Weel. I'll just take a tin of fruit." He had a tin of pineapple. Now the price of preserved fruit at that time and in such a place was something to make you sit up, so that Scotchman scored. I don't think I told you that when going up the river the first time we purchased a case of whisky from McLeod. Just fancy our surprise when it was broached on the launch to find a lively black snake coiled up in the place where a bottle should have been. The snake soon had a passage. That whisky did not produce any more snakes, for it was excellent spirit. In fact, I do not think there was a snake in a hog-head of it.

#### —A Long Tow.—

"When the work upon the McArthur was finished a start was made for Darwin with the ketch a tow. A tow of nearly 900 miles in the teeth of the nor-west monsoon was no joke. I often sat aft and watched the mass of foam astern which was caused by my prize, and speculated on what might happen; but nothing bad did. I am satisfied that the two men I had

taken from the Roper earned their money, and none was more thankful than they were when we reached our destination. In passing the English Company's Islands we noticed a fine waterfall tumbling down over a cliff into the sea. Of course, that would only last during the wet season. On our way home we passed through Cumberland Straits, and anchored off Point Dale, where we landed. The beach was plentifully strewn with pumice stone, probably washed there from the Straits of Sunda some 12 months before. On the beach I found a Queensland bean just sprouting. I took it with me to Darwin in a bouillie tin. I left it in my office from Saturday until Monday, during which time the shoot grew just 18 in. I then planted it at my quarters, and it rapidly spread over the bamboo trellis. Then the white ants had a say, and that was the last of my bean. I prosecuted my prisoners. The man was fined, the charge against the wife being withdrawn. The ketch and cargo were forfeited, and sold by auction.

#### —Strong Drink.—

"Just note this, and draw your own conclusions. The purchaser of one of the casks of spirits told me that, being dubious, he opened the cask, and found a number of cakes of tobacco nailed on the inside. The police were eventually stationed at the Roper and McArthur, and Mr. G. R. McMinn (the Government Surveyor and late Acting Government Resident) was appointed Stipendiary Magistrate at the latter place. Mr. McMinn was succeeded by the landing waiter from Port Darwin (Mr. W. G. Stretton), who now occupies the position I held in Port Darwin. Mr. Stretton has been over 30 years in the Northern Territory, and is an extremely valuable officer. He is a great authority on the aborigines, especially those of the Gulf of Carpentaria. In 1893 he communicated an interesting paper to Professor Stirling on the customs, rites, and superstitions of the aboriginal tribes of the Gulf of Carpentaria with a vocabulary. Mr. Stretton showed conclusively that there is an admixture of Malay blood with the niggers of the north coast. That intercourse with some foreign people existed nearly a century ago is proved by the records of Matthew Flinders. I consider that I had wonderful luck in having such varied experiences in connection with my work. I doubt if ever a customs officer had such luck before, at any rate in Australia, and I can look back on my work and say, 'All's well that ends well.'"

## TRIPS TO THE WESTWARD.

### AN HISTORICAL BAY.

#### No. XII.

"I had several trips to the westward," began Mr. Alfred Searcy, when he again took up the story of his experiences. "On one occasion I went with the view of ascertaining if there were any proas on that portion of the coast, while the other trips were to the Victoria River. When searching for the proas we landed at several places on the coast, but found nothing to indicate that it had been visited during recent years. It is understood that the Malays came here many years ago. Their presence, I should think, accounted for the great number of tamarind trees to be found from Point Keats to Point Pearce. I saw many evidently of great age. I never heard of the niggers on the coast to the west speaking Malay. It did not strike me as being a good place for the proas, for during the north-west monsoon there was no shelter, and beyond Point Pearce the water was too dirty.

#### —Treachery Bay.—

"We landed at Treachery Bay, so called from the fact that Capt. Stokes, of the Beagle, was speared here. The story is graphically told by Capt. Stokes in 'The Voyage of the H.M.S. Beagle' in the following words:—

I had just turned my head round to look after my followers when I was suddenly staggered by a violent and piercing blow about the left shoulder, and ere the dart had ceased to quiver in its destined mark, a long, loud yell, such as the savage can only produce, told me by whom I had been speared. One glance sufficed to show me the cliffs—so lately the abode of silence and solitude—swarming with the dusky forms of the natives, now indulging in all the exuberant action with which the Australian testifies his delight. One tall bushy-headed fellow led the group, and was evidently my successful assailant. I drew out the spear, which had entered the cavity of the chest, and retreated with all the swiftness I could command in the hope of reaching those who were coming up from the boat, and were then about halfway. I fully expected another spear while my back was turned; but fortunately the savages seemed only to think of getting down to the beach to complete their work. Onward I hurried, carrying the spear which I had drawn from the wound, and determined if, as I expected, overtaken to sell my life dearly. Each step, less steady than the former one, reminded me that I was fast losing blood; but I hurried on, still retaining the chronometer and grasping my only weapon of defence. The savage cry soon told me that my pursuers had found their way to the beach, while at every respiration the air escaping through the orifice of the wound warned me that the strength by which I was still enabled to struggle through the deep pools and various impediments in my path must fail me soon. I had fallen twice; each disaster being announced by a shout of vindictive triumph from the blood-hounds behind. To add to my distress I now

saw with utter dismay that Mr. Tarrant and the man with the instruments, unconscious of the fact that I had been speared, and therefore believing that I could make good my escape, were moving off towards the boat. I gave up all hope, and with that rapid glance at the past which in such an hour crowds the whole history of life upon the mind and one brief mental act of supplication or rather submission to Him in whose hands are the issues of life and death, I prepared for the last dread struggle. At that moment the attention of the retreating party was aroused by a boat approaching hastily from the ship—the first long, loud, wild shriek of the natives having most providentially apprised those on board of our danger. They turned and perceived that I was completely exhausted. I spent the last struggling energy I possessed to join them. Supported on each side I had just strength to direct them to turn towards our savage enemies, who were hurrying on in a long file, shouting and waving their clubs, and were now only about 30 yards off. Our turning momentarily checked their advance, whilst their force increased. During these very few and awfully anxious moments a party, headed by Lieut. Emery, hastened over the reef to our support. Another moment and ours would have been the fate of so many other explorers; the hand of the savage almost grasped our throats. We should have fallen a sacrifice in the cause of discovery, and our bones left to rot on this distant shore would have been trodden heedlessly under foot by the wandering native. At the sight of Lieut. Emery's party the natives flew with the utmost rapidity, covering their flight, either from chance or skill, by my party. In a moment the air, so lately echoing with their ferocious yells, was silent, and the scene of their intended massacre as lonely and deserted as before. I was soon got down to the boat, lifted over the ship's side, and stretched on the poop cabin table under the care of Mr. Bynoe, who on probing the wound gave me a cheering hope of its not proving fatal. The anxiety with which I watched his countenance and listened to the words of life or death the reader may imagine, but I cannot attempt to describe. The natives never throw a spear when the eye of the person they aim at is turned towards them, supposing that every one like themselves can avoid it. This was most fortunate, as, my side being towards them, the spear had to pass through the thick muscles of the breast before reaching my lungs. Another circumstance in my favour was that I had been very much reduced by my late exertions. The sufferings of that night I will not fatigue my readers by describing; but I can never forget the anxiety with which Mr. Bynoe watched over me during the whole of it. Neither can I forget my feelings of gratitude to the Almighty when my sunken eyes the next morning once more caught the first rays of the sun. It seemed as though I could discover in those an assurance that my hour was not yet come, and that it would be my lot for some time longer to gaze with grateful pleasure on their splendour. Several excursions were made during my stay in search of the natives, but without success. An encampment was found in the neighbourhood near a small fresh-water swamp, and by the things that were left behind it was





GREGORY'S TREE, VICTORIA RIVER.

evident that a hasty retreat had been made. It would have been as well if we could have punished these people in some way for their unprovoked attack; but to have followed them far into the bush would have been quite useless. A comparison of their conduct with that of the natives of Shoal Bay confirms what I have before stated of the extraordinary contrasts presented by the dispositions of the aboriginal inhabitants of Australia, for in both instances we were the first Europeans they had ever encountered. The observations which nearly cost me my life in endeavouring to obtain placed Point Pearce in lat. 14 deg. 25 m. 50 s. 8.; long. 2 deg. 49 m. W. of Port Essington. The time of high water at the full and change was 7 o'clock, when the tides rose from 20 to 26 ft. The cliffs forming it are of a reddish hue from the quantity of iron the rocks in the neighbourhood contain. To commemorate the accident which befell me, the bay within Point Pearce was called Treachery Bay and a high hill over it Providence Hill.

"Isn't that beautifully told!" remarked Mr. Searcy. "Well, as we went inland we did not see any sign of niggers, but all at once one of the party sang out, 'Look out, the niggers are around us!' We retreated immediately, and saw fresh nigger tracks over ours. The aborigines did not show up until we were a few yards away from the beach, when several rushed down shaking their spears and making most unbecoming signs to us. They retreated as we returned to the beach and came down again when we left. I do not think they quite understood firearms or they would never have ventured so close in the way

they did. It was fortunate for them that they did not let a single spear go. Mr. C. Mann, the well-known engineer, now at Pinnaroo, was one of the party."

#### —Victoria River Scenery.—

"The Victoria River is full of interest. The scenery is very rugged, wild, and picturesque, the rocky formation being of a most extraordinary character. The Rev. J. E. Tenison-Woods described it as the most weird-looking country he had seen in Australia. Astonishing echoes were to be heard in some of the reaches, and during the evening I have fired a good many cartridges for the purpose of obtaining the echo effect. At Holdfast Reach about 50 miles up the river, there was a baobab tree, upon which the word "Beagle" had been carved some 54 years before. Only the letters B.E.A. were visible when I visited it. It was generally supposed that coal existed in this portion of the country. Shale veins ran right through the ranges. At Curiosity Peak great quantities were visible. At the Peak the flats, some miles in extent, called Mosquito Flats, form one of the greatest difficulties experienced when navigating the river. When we were stuck on the mud there a wave came up fully 2 ft. high, so we were soon afloat again. The rush of water was for some time actually appalling. To give you an idea of the tide when at anchor at Holdfast Reach we tried it with  $\frac{1}{2}$  the patent log, and it registered six knots."

## INTERESTING LANDMARKS.

### RELICS OF EXPLORERS.

#### No. XIII.

"I had a look at Gregory's old camp on the bank of the Victoria River. It had evidently been formed under two large baobab trees. On the one nearest the bank several dates were cut. They evidently denoted the arrival of the party in 1855 and the departure in 1856, and were in a perfect state of preservation. On one of the trees was the message—'Letter in forge,' and on the other 'Letter in oven.' A quantity of pigiron discharged from the schooner Tom Tough was used to build the forge and oven. Gregory's main camp was here for eight months. This grand old explorer, who is well over 80 years of age, is still alive in Queensland. The baobab tree is to be met with everywhere after rounding Point Pearce. Some of them grow to an enormous size. The largest specimens I saw were near Fossil Head. The niggers prize the baobab tree on

account of the fruit, the seeds of which are eaten. We paid a visit to Timber Creek, so named on account of the fact that timber used for repairing the Tom Tough was obtained there. The Tom Tough was a schooner of upwards of 200 tons, and took stores up the river for Gregory. She was evidently of very shallow draught, and it must have been fearful work getting up the river. It, however, showed what grit and pluck can do. At any rate, the bottom was nearly knocked out of the schooner, and she had to undergo extensive repairs before she left the depot.

#### —Dangerous Spears.—

"The niggers on the Victoria and in the Cambridge Gulf country generally are remarkably clever at making spear heads out of glass bottles. The patience display-



ed in chipping them is simply marvellous, as they are perfectly shaped and brought to a very fine point. As can be imagined, these spears make very nasty wounds. I saw a man who had been speared in the face just alongside his nose. In fact, the spear almost lifted the nose from the face. He removed the plug of wadding, and I could see pieces of glass in the wound. Besides this he had a stone spear wound in his back.

—A Fine Plucked 'Un.—

"To give you some idea of the endurance and suffering undergone by some of the cattle men, I will mention an event that occurred in the Gulf of Carpentaria country. The niggers had been playing the deuce with the cattle; so a party went out to expostulate. During the argument the manager of the station received a very severe wound in his chest from a large stone-headed spear. After considerable suffering and trouble he reached the Roper on his way to Darwin for medical assistance. It was a case of something like 900 miles to see a doctor. When starting from the Roper the poor chap was thrown from his horse and had a leg broken. After a rest of several weeks he made another start, the leg being very much out of shape. The sufferer eventually reached Darwin, and left by steamer for the south. When I said goodbye I most certainly never expected to see the man again, but in six months he was back, cured and his leg straight.

—A Heavy Pull.—

"When on the way to the Victoria River in 1893 with Mr. H. W. H. Stevens in the Victoria, off Cape Ford, a hundred miles from home, some mishap occurred to the boiler which promptly stopped our steaming. After about three days' hard work the steamer was anchored safely under the Perrin Islands. There was very little wind, so it meant towing her in a boat. Mr. Stevens, myself, a nigger, and a Chinaman, started in the ship's boat for Darwin. We coasted all we could, working the tides where possible. The only time we had any wind was in crossing Fog Bay, when a very fierce squall came off the land with heavy rain, and slogging work it was to keep the boat in anything like a position. We reached Darwin just 45 hours after leaving the steamer. That was not bad for four men in a heavy ship's boat. The heat was intense.

—Stuart's Tree Visited.—

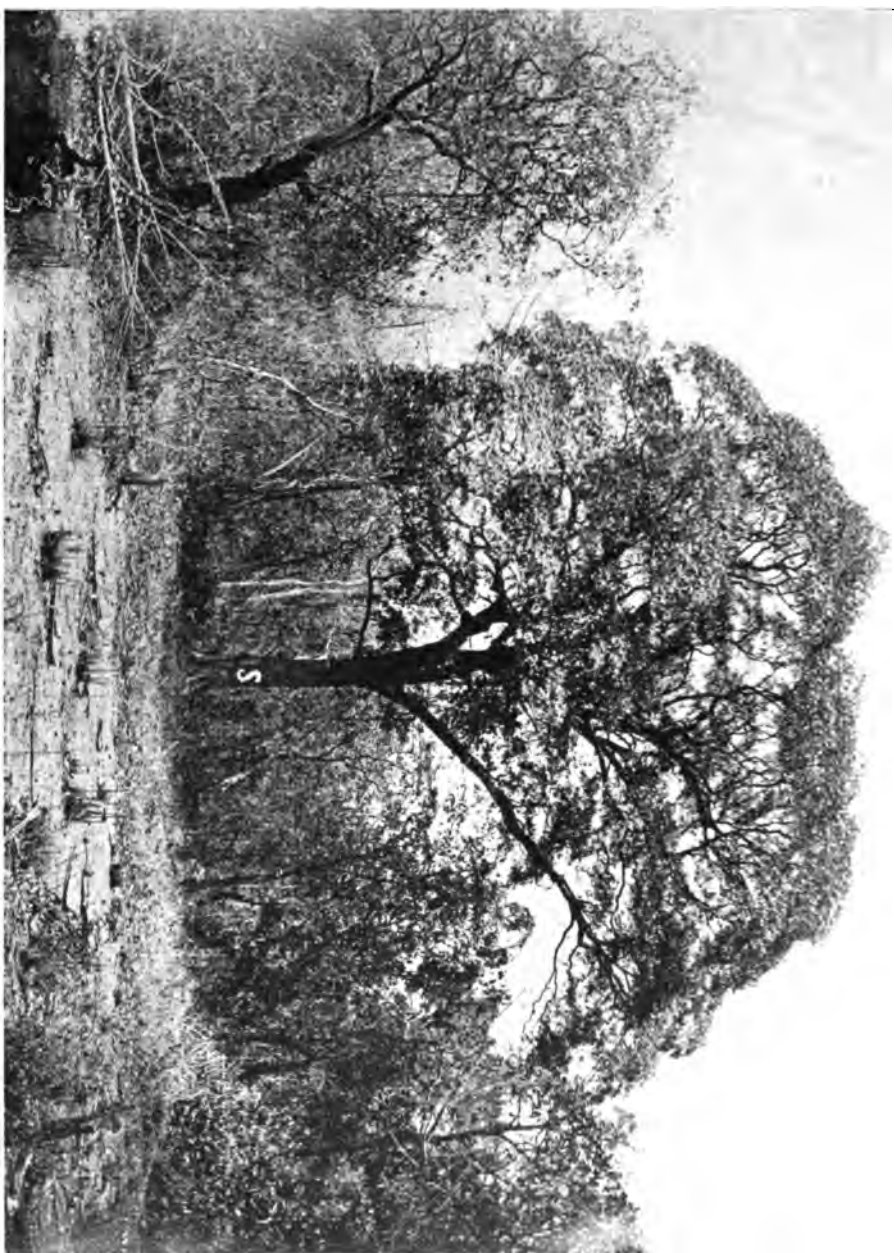
"I was delighted to have the opportunity of visiting Stuart's tree, which I did with the Government Resident (Mr. Justice Dashwood). As a nipper I saw Stuart enter the Police Barracks in 1862, when he returned from his great feat of crossing the Australian Continent, and little did I think then that some 30 years afterwards I should see the living monument that settled the question of Stuart's having reached the

north coast. I have another reason for remembering the return of Stuart, for my father, who was sergeant-major in charge of the barracks in those days, had to meet the explorer on the North road, and escort him into Adelaide. I dare say many will remember the great demand there was for the bullets brought back by the party as souvenirs of the memorable trip across the continent. Living in barracks as we did, my brothers and myself were lucky enough to secure a good many bullets. At the time the settlement was at Escape Cliffs I believe the only search made for the tree was from the sea, but it transpired that from there it could not be seen, for there was a narrow but dense belt of mangroves and jungle intervening. One of the party (Mr. John Cleland, of Gothenburg fame), who was at the cliffs, and formed one of those engaged in the earlier search, fully realized why the tree had not been discovered before. From the land side the landmark stood out large and distinctive. Being a curio fiend, and seeing a dry branch, I sent a Malay boy up the tree, and had it cut off. I think the Resident sent a piece to each of the surviving members of Stuart's party. The initials on the tree could be plainly traced.

—Escape Cliffs.—

"Of course we visited Escape Cliffs. Capt. Stokes, in his diary, describes how they were named, as follows:—

I shall proceed to explain this remark by relating the startling circumstances from which Escape Cliffs received their name. A few days after my interview in the dingy with the natives Mr. Fitzmaurice went ashore to compare the compasses. From the quantity of iron contained in the rocks, it was necessary to select a spot free from their influence. A sandy beach at the foot of Escape Cliffs was accordingly chosen. The observations had been commenced, and were about half completed, when on the summit of the cliffs, which rose about 20 ft. above their heads, suddenly appeared a large party of natives with piked and quivering spears, as if about immediately to deliver them. Stamping on the ground and shaking their heads to and fro, they threw out their long shaggy locks in a circle, whilst their glaring eyes flashed with fury, as they champed and spit out the ends of their long beards, a custom with Australian natives when in a state of violent excitement. They were evidently in earnest and bent on mischief. It was therefore not a little surprising to behold their paroxysm of rage evaporated before the happy presence of mind displayed by Mr. Fitzmaurice, in immediately beginning to dance and shout, though in momentary expectation of being pierced by a dozen spears. In this he was imitated by Mr. Keys, who was assisting in the observations, and who at the moment was a little distance off and might have escaped. Without, however, thinking of himself, he very nobly joined his companion in amusing the natives; and they succeeded in diverting them from their evident evil designs, until a boat landing in a bay near drew their attention. The foremost of this party was recognised to be the ill-looking fellow who left me in the canoe with a revengeful scowl upon his face. Messrs. Fitzmaurice and Keys had firearms lying on the ground within reach of their hands; the instant, however, they ceased dancing and attempted to touch them a dozen spears were pointed at their



STUART'S TREE, NORTH COAST OF AUSTRALIA, SINCE DESTROYED BY FIRE.



breasts. Their lives hung upon a thread, and their escape must be regarded as truly wonderful, and only to be attributed to the happy readiness with which they adapted themselves to the perils of their situation. This was the last we saw of the natives in Adam Bay, and the meeting is likely to be long remembered by some, and not without pleasant recollections; for although, at the time it was just looked upon as a very serious affair, it afterwards proved a great source of mirth. No one could recall to mind, without laughing, the ludicrous figures necessarily cut by our shipmates, when to amuse the natives they figured on the tight fantastic toe; and the readers, who look at the plate in the frontispiece representing this really serious affair, will behold two men literally dancing for their lives.

"It was during the dry season," proceeded Mr. Searcy, "when we visited Es-

cape Cliffs, and we set fire to the dense growth over the site of the old settlement. When the fire had done its work the position of the old buildings and stockade could be traced. There were a good many cannon balls and empty shells lying about. This was all there was to show for the expenditure of what I have heard stated to be £64,000. I am wrong, for at the mouth of the Adelaide was an old iron tank left by the early settlers, and many a shot I had at it when passing. Now, if you want a real good yarn about Escape Cliffs just get Mr. R. H. Edmunds, I.S.M., the late Superintendent of the Stockade, on the warpath, for he was a surveyor there. Many a yarn we have had about the old tank."

## LAST TRIP OF THE S.S. ELLENGOWAN.

### A HAZARDOUS VOYAGE.

#### XIV.

"On June 20, 1886," continued Mr. Searcy, "I started on a cruise which certainly for discomfort, excitement, danger, and hard work beat any other trip I had on the north coast. Information had been received that a ketch called the *Budgaree*, with a large cargo of stores, had left Thursday Island for Borrolooke, McArthur River, without having first cleared at the custom house. In fact, the master had defied the authorities. So I took advantage of the first trip of the rehabilitated steamer *Ellengowan*, which was under contract to carry mails to our gulf ports, to try and catch the ketch and bring the master to justice. The clearing out of the ketch from Thursday Island, in conjunction with the fact that the man I had arrested at the McArthur River the previous year had reopened his store, made things look a bit suspicious. I had with me Mr. H. Pinder, in case there was any navigating to do, as he held a mate's certificate. Among the passengers was the late Cpl. Power, officer in charge of the native police at the Roper.

—The *Ellengowan*.—

"The *Ellengowan*, a steamer of some 30 tons net register, was built in Christiania about 1866. For some time she was employed on the New Guinea coast in connection with the mission work. Somewhere about 1880 the vessel was bought by the

Sugar Company on the Daly River, but almost immediately afterwards she was wrecked in the river, where she remained for about four years. The steamer was eventually raised, and purchased by Mr. C. S. Copeland, who had her overhauled, and he and others thought she was thoroughly repaired. Upon the strength of this Mr. Copeland accepted the contract to carry mails to the gulf ports. One strange thing about the machinery, when the steamer was raised and the mud cleaned out of her, was that it was almost as bright as the day the vessel went down. There was something good in Daly River mud apparently. The preliminaries prior to starting were not encouraging. The first engineer engaged filled the boilers chock-a-block with water, then lit the fires. The fact was discovered in time, and the engineer got a passage ashore. After great difficulty the owner succeeded in engaging two men as first and second engineers, and two splendid fellows they proved. But for their untiring energy and watchfulness and the seamanship of the master (Capt. Macredie) none would have been left to tell the tale. The engineers' names were Ben Griffe and Shaw. Griffe, the chief, was nearly stone deaf, he having lost his hearing while in the arctic regions. I think he served under Capt. Nares. Just before we started it was found that somebody had forgotten to

withdraw a plug of wood from a valve hole, or whatever it is called, in the bottom of the steamer. A man dived underneath and fixed that properly.

#### —Under Way.—

"When we finally started soon after day-break there was a light south-east breeze, so it did not come home to us that we were like a half-tide rock on account of the boat being so deeply laden. As hour after hour passed away and we merrily logged off our seven knots an hour we congratulated ourselves on the satisfactory state of affairs. We expected to have a quick trip; but, alas! the best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley, and so it was with us. We passed the Vernons all right, but when we reached the open water on the other side we found the wind had risen and raised a short, choppy head sea. By the actions of the chief we noticed that everything was not running as smoothly as he could wish. However, nothing very alarming occurred until 5 in the afternoon, when we were well on our way to Cape Don. Then the engines stopped short, not to go again until repairs had been effected. We were lying exposed to the full strength of the south-east gale and the heavy sea raised from the full depth of Van Diemen's Gulf, with the coast of McIlville Island under our lee.

#### —A Terrible Time.—

"After a terrible time of some hours in the trough of the sea some of the machinery was lashed in its place or screwed up. We tried hard to get round Cape Don, and hammered away until 3 a.m. During the repairs we held the engineers in position so they could attend to their particular business. One great roll the steamer made threw a tin of castor oil into the chief's face, a quantity of the beastly stuff going down his throat. He had a bad time for a bit. Finding that we were losing more by leeway than we made the boat's head was put in the direction of Cape Otham, the nearest shelter. This we reached about 8 p.m. on June 21. The engineers made a thorough overhaul of the engines, &c., and found among other defects that the machinery had not been properly fitted and keyed. The whole of the bearings had too much play. Some of the bearings of the shaft had never been bolted down, nor had the donkey engine been fastened to its bed. The forepeak we found to be nearly full of water, which came through an opening in the plates. These we tommed down, and made watertight. There were several rivets missing.

#### —Another Start.—

"In the face of all this we might reasonably have returned to Darwin, but we decided otherwise; and, as repairs had been

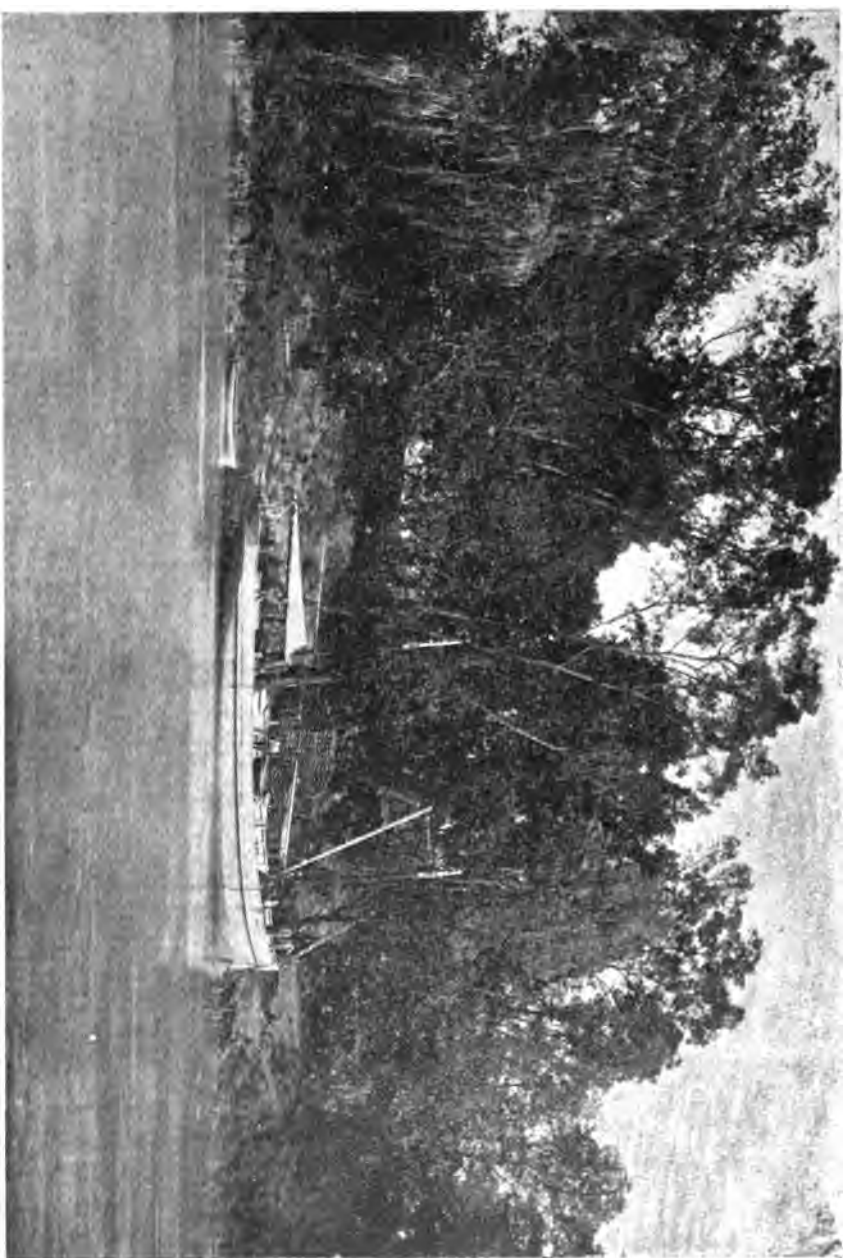
effected, a fresh start was made. From this time until we reached the Roper it was one incessant tinkering and repairing of some minor defect in the machinery, while at least every 12 hours we had an absolute stoppage owing to the giving out or breaking down of some more important part of the engine. For the first two or three days we accepted the position cheerfully enough, cracked jokes at any one's expense, taxed one another with having forgotten to pay the wash-woman before starting, or with being the Jonah who was causing all the trouble. Then as the days wore wearily on some of us felt very much inclined to cast lots to see who really was the Jonah and cast him overboard, but doubting the presence of whales on that coast with sufficient capacity to entomb any of us, the idea was never put into practice.

#### —Keeping Close to Land.—

"So as not to be too far from the land in the event of some irreparable accident happening to our very erratic engines, or to the well-worn hull that carried them, we kept as close in shore as possible by steering from headland to headland and not coasting all the bays we passed. The first night out we lost nearly all the lubricating oil. The balance was soon used up, so the butter went to the engine room, all the kerosine having been taken possession of by that department. Of course we were living on tinned meat, but before we had a show every bit of fat was rendered out of it for the engines. I subsequently remembered that there were two cases of axle grease in the cargo. These were quickly dug out, and the contents used after having been mixed with kerosine. It was not by any means an ideal lubricant, but having nothing else we had to use it.

#### —"All Up With Us."—

"On the night of June 24, when off the land some considerable distance, it came on to blow a heavy gale from the south-east, with a heavy sea. The steamer's head was at once headed for the shore. About 2 a.m. the skipper thought it was all up with us, and that it would be impossible to make the land. There were some 18 or 19 people on board, 10 of whom were Europeans, and there was only one small boat. It was arranged that if the worst came to the worst the Europeans would make for the boat. As no doubt it would have meant a fight, I had my revolver handy the rest of that night. Fortunately, however, we managed to struggle in under the land at Blyth's River. All this time the pumps were at work, for this iron steamer was leaking badly. The engineers took advantage of the spell, and tied things together again. Our fresh water supply being nearly exhausted a party landed to search for some, but did not succeed in finding any."



LOADING COPPER ORE, DALY RIVER.



## LAST TRIP OF THE S.S. ELLENGOWAN.

### EXCITING EXPERIENCES.

#### No. XV.

The last article concluded by relating how the skipper thought it was all up with those on the derelict Ellengowan, and how the steamer managed to struggle in under the land at Blyth's River. Mr. Searcy continued his story as follows:—"We made a fresh start at daybreak on June 26, intending to run through Brown's Straits. Owing to the south-east wind and heavy sea this was not deemed safe, so a course was shaped for Cape Wessel. Keeping well under the lee of the islands for shelter, we passed the cape soon after mid-day of June 27, and then felt the full force of the wind and the accumulated strength of the long rolling waves which had gathered force in their passage from the other side of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

#### —Another Breakdown.—

"The result was that our engines at once refused duty, and we lay there, tossing about at the mercy of the wind and waves. Repairs had hardly been effected before the eccentric broke, but the engineers connected the other one, so we were able to keep the engines going. There was the disadvantage that we could not go astern, but had to keep moving ahead. By this time our fresh water was just exhausted. We discovered that one of the tanks leaked, while the wretched cook had been extravagant enough to boil the spuds in fresh water. We accordingly resolved to put into Melville Bay (Gulf of Carpentaria), where I knew the Malays had a camping ground (Limba Pandria), and get a fresh stock. On June 28 we anchored in the bay, but not at the camping place. We were not able to pull round to it on account of the strong wind and heavy sea. However, we were lucky enough when we landed to strike good water, apparently permanent. As fresh nigger tracks were very numerous we kept a sharp lookout, but we did not catch sight of any aborigines.

#### —Fuel Wanted.—

"As the engineer feared our stock of coal would not last much longer, it was decided when we started on June 29 to shape a course inside the islands, so that we could have a little protection, and if necessary seek a sheltered spot and cut firewood. Soon after starting our cranky old engine jibbed again. We had to keep clear of the land, so there we lay with a nasty sea and thick heavy weather, drifting to leeward,

while the engineers were straightening matters for another start. Repairs were effected at daylight on June 30. We kept going nearly all day, and then something else went wrong—the air pumps and piston rod this time. We managed to get under the land, and anchored on Chasm Island. The engineers were busy all night and part of the next day repairing, and we made a start about mid-day for Connection Island, inside of Groote Island, where we anchored at sundown. That night I had a great haul of fine red schnapper. Our water was finished, so we landed on the island next day (July 2) to hunt for some and at the same time to cut wood. By digging we found a little fresh water, but it was thick and muddy. We kept at the wood-cutting all day.

#### —Hard Work.—

"The intense heat and the bad water did not make things cheerful. Then we had to get the wood into the boat, which was not pleasant work. The island was surrounded by a coral reef, and there were some hundred yards of this to walk over. Then we had to wade out into the water, on account of the surf. It was awfully hard work, and the coral cut our boots to pieces. While we were on shore the cook's galley caught fire, but before much damage was done the flames were got under. Another start was made that evening. We shaped a course for Maria Island, off the mouth of the Roper, and next morning reached the little bay where the Springbok discharged some coals in 1871 or 1872. To our great delight we found that the coal, which had lain for some 14 years exposed to wind and weather, shine and storm, had in no way deteriorated. We set to and shipped about five tons, having to carry it down to the boat in brandy cases. It was nice sort of coalhumping. Snakes and centipedes seemed to appreciate that coal heap as a dwelling place.

#### —Entering the Roper. —

"On the morning of July 4 we stood across to the mouth of the Roper, and with the assistance of Mr. Pinder, who I have mentioned had been on the river for some time in the Young Australian, we speedily found the channel, entered the river, steamed 20 miles, and anchored. The



engineers immediately commenced to repair the usual damages, besides which there was something wrong with the shaft. Next day we steamed up the river until within about three miles of the Wilton. We ran on a sandbank, which convinced us that being in a steamer that could go astern was rather an advantage. We kedged her off all right, however. Next day the steamer was taken up to within four miles of Leichhardt's Bar to discharge cargo. We were here four days discharging and repairing damages.

#### --Life on the Roper.--

"During that time I stopped principally at the Bar where there was plenty of life. A constant stream of overlanders were passing through, it being in the height of the Kimberley rush. One of these—Mr. Hugh Fraser—took telegrams from me to the Elsie, for Port Darwin, to ease the minds of our friends, for we were 12 days overdue, and, owing to the constant stream of people, word would quickly have reached them if we had arrived at the Roper. Police were stationed at Mount McMinn, and the store was now licensed, so things were not exactly the same as when I previously visited the Bar. The old storekeeper was dead, and another reigned in his place. I saw Fraser buy six tins of curry powder—when he had departed the storekeeper told me the contents were rotten—cheerful for Fraser when the time came for him to make himself a nice savoury curry. There was a pig at the store, why I cannot say; but it was decided to kill it. How the fellows camped round about did roll up when the word went forth that there was fried pork for tea. What a change from the eternal salt beef and bouilli! The dough twister at the camp made excellent johnnie cakes, but better known as something on the coals. There was no baking powder in the place, so Eno's fruit salt was used instead, and splendidly it did its work. With our pork we had my pet abomination, the old-fashioned preserved potatoes. Of course one could make one's own chutney—plum jam and Worcester sauce mixed—and excellent it is.

#### —A Strange Character.—

"I could spin pages of yarns about the sayings and doings of the fellows camped there, but it would not do. One character I must mention. He only removed his trousers when old age necessitated a new pair. This happened while we were camped there. Having secured a new pair he went to the river at dusk to effect the exchange and have the usual trousers wash. On a sudden he stepped on to what he thought was a log, but it was a big alligator. I cannot say if it was disgust or surprise, but the 'gator cleared like a flash, and the man got such a start that he did not get over it for some time. We just missed the 'Ragged Thirteen,' a notorious

party of hard cases, who were working their way to Kimberley on the 'Never Never.' Cpl. Power had a tremendous dog cart, in which we started to pay a visit to his camp at Mount McMinn. When passing through 'Hell's Gate' every spoke of one of the wheels flew out, and we all came a nice cropper, but nobody was hurt. Nevertheless we did not forget 'Hell's Gate' in a hurry.

#### —A Start for the McArthur.—

"Having done all we could to the steamer a start was made for the McArthur on July 11. We were brought up short by running on a shelf of jagged rock near the Wilton. If this had happened a length ahead it would have ripped the side out of the steamer. We floated off at high water, and resumed our voyage. However we were on discoveries bent, for that same evening we ran on a sandbank where the chart showed 3 or 4 fathoms. We tried hard but unsuccessfully to get the steamer off, and had to wait six days until the tide floated us off. I forgot to mention that while up the river the bunker lid being off one day I saw daylight through the ship's side for a space of over a foot in length. This could only be stopped by building a trough and running cement in. Whenever the steamer stopped we could hear the water running into her from the stern gland. Several sore places were discovered, but by dint of keeping the pumps going we managed to keep the boat fairly free of water.

#### —Commandeering Meat.—

"Before we left the landing, where all the cargo was lying, by some mysterious means a case of preserved meat found its way on board. If it was ever missed no doubt somebody else got the credit, for there were plenty knocking about who deserved it. It may have been the English swear words, used by the Chinese cook when he fell down the cabin steps with that case on his shoulder that caused the meat to go so quickly, for go it did. It transpired that this was all there was on board, so we were soon on the short commons of tea and flour. We made repeated excursions ashore, but had poor luck with the game, which was very scarce for some reason at that time. Our bag were one kangaroo, a native companion, and several pigeons.

#### —"Look, Bungawah!"—

"During one of our walks ashore we sighted some niggers, who rushed away at once. However, we managed after a great deal of bother to make friends. One old man was full of 'Bungawah Lowrie'—Capt. Lowrie was in command of the steamer Young Australian which was wrecked, and which I mentioned in a previous article. We were walking along, when all at once the old man caught hold of me and hauled me back, saying 'Look Bunga-



MR. ALFRED SEARCY IN HIS BUSH DRESS.



wah.' Another step and I should have been on top of an immense yellow snake, the bite of which, as far as I could understand, was very bad. It was the snake, however, that went under this time, for I

shot its head off. The old man immediately annexed it, no doubt thinking that bungawahs are useful at times. I did not begrudge him the snake. Bungawah means boss, captain, or chief."

## LAST TRIP OF THE S.S. ELLENGOWAN.

### THE END OF THE STEAMER.

#### No. XVI.

"During the time the Ellengowan remained aground in the Roper," continued Mr. Searcy, "our position was extremely uncomfortable, for, owing to the very sharp lines of the vessel, she lay on her bilge at an angle of 45 deg., and everybody had to crawl about on hands and knees. On July 18 we steamed down the river for a bit, when it was discovered that the shaft was bent, and that the bearing supporting it had nearly worked its way through the side of the ship, and consequently had to be cut right away. After this little matter of detail had been attended to we steamed out of the river to Maria Island for more coal. I forgot to state that while at the bar a quantity of Leichhardt pine was cut and taken on board for use in the furnace. How pleased we were to find that it would not burn! It was all thrown overboard. In readiness for the coal a lot of canvas bags had been made; so it did not take us long to ship 10 tons. I thought bags were better than brandy cases for carrying coal. While on the island we saw immense numbers of bronzewing pigeons, and that was our share of them. On the morning of July 20 we anchored off South-West Island, at the mouth of the MacArthur.

#### —Off to Borroloola.—

"In spite of the fact that all hope of catching the Budgaree had gone, we immediately started in the steamer's only boat, a small dingey, with six persons, blankets, provisions (such as they were), &c., for the township of Borroloola, a distance of 40 miles. To get into the river we had to carry the boat for about half a mile over a very soft mud flat. When I was at the MacArthur previously we used another entrance, the one opposite to Centre Island. Consequently the river for a considerable portion of the way was new to me. Foolishly we did not take the tracing of the new entrance with us, for there was one on board; so we were not sure

whether we were in the proper entrance. We pulled all day long and still I did not recognise any landmarks. During the afternoon a nigger hailed us from the left-hand bank, yelling "Borroloola, trrrr; Borroloola, trrrr," and pointing in a certain direction. We were cross and tired, and would not take any notice of the black-fellow; but we were sorry enough afterwards for our indifference. I recognised the man as one I had met before on the river, and a most extraordinary looking fellow he was. If you stood at the back of him squarely you could see him looking round the corners of his head without moving. For feet he had heels only, the rest of the pedal extremities, I suppose, at some time having been burnt or cut off.

#### —Bushed in Batten's Creek.—

"We pulled on and on until 9 o'clock at night, and realizing that we were in narrow waters, it came to us as a shock that we were where we ought not to be. In fact, we were bushed in Batten's Creek. There was nothing for it but to camp, so we landed, and hauled the boat up a little. On the top of the bank it was decided to camp. One of the passengers said he was going to walk to Borroloola. We told him he could walk to Halifax if he liked. He started into the bush, and we rolled ourselves up in our blankets, dog tired, careless of niggers or anything else. Some time afterwards we heard the steps of our mate returning, and then a crush of branches. He had apparently walked over the bank but with great presence of mind he yelled, "I am going to sleep in the boat." At day-break we roused out, perishing with cold, for our blankets and clothes were wet through with dew. The only tucker we had was a sort of bread, so seeing some 'galares,' I had a shot at them and knocked one over. Oh, the disgust! for not 20 yards away in the grass had been a great flock of Burdekin ducks, which we had not spotted. My shot, however, settled the

matter. I picked up my bird and soon had it in the coals. While eating it I told the other fellows if they wanted game for breakfast they had better hurry up and get some.

—"I See Schooner."

"We pulled back for some hours, and were just making up our minds to try and reach the steamer again when the Malay boy cried out 'I see schooner,' and there, sure enough, she was. Now we realized how it was that we had made such a howling mess of things. Just before reaching it on the way up Pinder and I were pulling and Copeland steering, and to avoid a reef of rocks Copeland had hugged the right-hand shore, thus opening out the broad entrance to Batten's Creek, which we thought to be the continuance of the MacArthur. If anybody had for a moment looked up the schooner would have been seen, but when the other side was made she was shut in. If we had only interviewed the nigger we would have saved ourselves a 50-miles' pull. From where we camped Borroolooka was only about 17 miles distant. The sight of the schooner put new life into us, and we made the dingy hum over the three miles to where the craft was anchored. I immediately boarded her, put the broad arrow on the mainmast, intimating that I seized her in the Queen's name, and with almost the same breath said, 'For God's sake give me a bottle of beer.' The beer was forthcoming, and good it was. I found that I knew the master well, he being an old Port Adelaide man. The mate was also the owner of the ketch. He only had a coasting certificate, and had to ship a deep-sea master when he left the colony in which his certificate was issued.

—A Pathetic Story.—

"There were a number of passengers on board, several of whom had fever very badly. In the little cabin was a poor woman unconscious, a victim of fever. This was truly a most pitiable case. She had left her home in Queensland to nurse her daughter, the wife of a manager of one of the stations on the tablelands, through a sickness, and when on her way home was struck down with malarial fever. The poor woman died two days afterwards, while the ketch was still in the river.

—Departure of the Budgaree.—

"After a good night's rest I entered into business, and found that the master was solely to blame, the owner of the craft being at his mercy. This, in conjunction with the fact that she had so many fever patients on board, decided me to inflict commensurate fines, covering all our expenses, which the owner gladly paid. I must say that he treated us royally during our stay on board, and we were fit for good tucker. The day after our arrival Copeland, a Malay seaman, and the two passengers started for the settlement with the mails. The next day Copeland re-

turned with the Malay, and reported that the settlement was in a state of chaos, owing to the absence of police. He brought with him for the use of our boat a quarter of beef. On account of the hot weather it was necessary to salt it down at once, which Pinder and I did, with the assistance of some station people who were camped on the bank of the river. The local residents also supplied the salt. I might mention that duty on the cargo landed by the ketch had been collected for us at Thursday Island; also that there was no connection between my man of the previous year and this craft. On the morning of July 23 the Budgaree sailed, and we made a start for the steamer at 2 p.m.

—Weird Weary Work.—

"Copeland and his man were done up with their long pull from the settlement, so Pinder and I had to do the first spell of rowing. We pulled until dusk, when we landed and boiled the billy. Then came a weary pull of several hours, the night being pitch dark. We got mixed up in some of the mangrove creeks, but an occasional glimpse of the Southern Cross let us know that we were making to the northward, and therefore must reach the sea in time. It was weary, weird work, the only sounds, besides the splash of our oars, being mysterious cracking noises in the mangroves, and now and again the splash of some great brute tumbling into the river. Soon, after midnight we reached the open sea, but we had no idea where we were. There was not a sign of the steamer. There was nothing for it but to wait for daybreak; so, having no anchor, an oar was driven into the mud and the painter made fast to keep the boat afloat, for we could hear the alligators wallowing and bellowing on the mudbank adjacent. It blew from every point of the compass during the night, and heavy rain fell, so it can be imagined what a time we four had in the little boat. 'Three men in a boat' were nothing to it. At daybreak we caught sight of the steamer some four miles distant. After a terrible struggle over the mud flats, during which I knocked over a couple of ducks, we finally reached the steamer, thoroughly played out. The captain told us that the barometer had fallen 1 in. during the night.

—A Start for Home.—

"A start was immediately made for home. During our absence the engineers had been hard at work. Our luck seemed to have turned, for during the run home we had hardly a ripple on the water, and the steamer did not break down once. We brought a little fat from the MacArthur for the engines. When off New Year's Island we spoke the schooner Griffen, but not a drop of oil could we get. We sighted a big school of black fish, which could no doubt, have supplied the oil; but they didn't. We called in at the Revenue Station, Bowen Straits, and secured some kero-

sine and salt buffalo, and arrived home on July 20. Just as we were entering the harbour something went wrong with a pump in the engine room. I shall ever remember Capt. Macredie for his skill as a navigator and the untiring dexterity and energy displayed by Ben Griffe and Shaw.

—The Ellengowan Condemned.—

"The Ellengowan, at the request of the Governor, was inspected by some experts, and the remark of one of them after an examination of the steamer gives an

idea of their opinion of the vessel. 'Good God! the idea of men going to sea in a thing like this.' Shortly after our return the Ellengowan was turned into a quarantine vessel, and plenty of pumping was required. Capt. Marsh and the late Mr. J. H. Servante, who was my landing waiter, boarded a steamer before it was known that smallpox was on board. So for several weeks these two had the Ellengowan to themselves. Soon after they were released down she went in 15 fathoms of water—the best place for her."

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## MURDERS BY BLACKS.

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### MALAYS THE VICTIMS.

#### No. XVII.

"On the way to the McArthur in the s.s. Active," continued Mr. Searcy, taking up another subject, "we ran into the Goyder River, to land Mr. D'Arcy Uhr and his party of men to search for cypress pine. Mr. Uhr had also a cutter and two Malay seamen to attend on the camp when formed further up the river. We returned to the Goyder 17 days afterwards. Upon entering the river we noticed a large fire on the beach on the western side, and also heard several rifle shots, evidently fired as a signal. I immediately went ashore. This necessitated a hard pull, as it was a dirty night, and the wind, being against the tide, raised a nasty joggle. Upon the beach I found Mr. Uhr and party camped. Mr. Uhr reported that the natives had murdered the two Malay seamen, and that the cutter was lost. Up to then no trace of the bodies had been found, so it was determined to make a search next day.

—Search for the Victims.—

"At daybreak we started, and first landed at a very large banyan tree on the east bank, but after a thorough search we could not find any signs of the victims. We then crossed to the scene of the murder, which was pointed out to us by a Goulburn Island boy who saw the deed. It transpired that it was almost the same spot, near an immense kitchen-midden composed of cockle shells, where the late Capt. Carrington so

narrowly escaped being speared, the spear passing between his arm and body. We could find no sign of the bodies, they having evidently been thrown into the river, which was simply alive with alligators. The cutter we found secreted in the mangroves, with all the spars and gear cut out of her. Several holes had been made in her top sides and in her lockers, evidently with a tomahawk, while she also had a mangrove stump through her bottom. On a sandy beach well back from the mangroves we found blood-stained clothing and boat's gear.

—Story of the Murder.—

"Larrikin, the Goulburn Island boy, stated that one day they had just entered the river when the cutter was struck by a squall and capsized. The three men then swam to the dingey, which was towing astern. As they got into the boat they saw some natives on the beach, who called to the Malays in Broken Macassar dialect to come ashore, which they proceeded to do. When within easy range the niggers suddenly picked up their spears, which had hitherto been concealed, and threw them at the occupants of the dingey, striking one Malay in the breast and the other in the loins. The men then jumped overboard, capsizing the dingey. The niggers again called out to them to come ashore, and they would not hurt them any more. Larrikin advised them not to go, but to try and swim

the river. In their wounded condition they could not do so, and made for the land. The niggers then rushed at them with mitpurdingos, and battered their heads in. Larrikin immediately started for the opposite shore, a distance of three miles, the niggers while he was within range trying to spear him. In spite of the sharks and alligators he reached the shore safely. He arrived at the camp next evening, and the party at once abandoned it, leaving their tents, tools, and stores. Mr. Uhr was absent exploring. When the cutter capsized the Malays lost their firearms, or things might have been different. After our unsuccessful search for the bodies we steamed up the river to the original camp, where we found everything intact. What a haul it would have been for the blacks if they had realized it had been abandoned, for there were axes, saws, and other tools and rations lying about in the open tents. We soon had everything on board.

#### —The Murderers.—

"When returning down the river, within four or five miles of the anchorage, we noticed some niggers on the beach, who were making signs for us to land, which we did. Their conduct looked very suspicious, and, as it was a splendid place for an ambush, we speedily offered an argument which made the blacks beat a retreat. Larrikin, who was with us, recognised the murderers in the party. We searched their camp, destroying or carrying away all their valuables, such as dilly bags, bones of defunct relatives, spears, &c. We also found some Malay clothing and several articles belonging to the cutter. A fine Malay canoe, which had for a painter a blood-stained piece of rope from the cutter, was confiscated. Among the articles brought away were some native mosquito nets, made of finely plaited grass, evidently worn over the head while asleep. These were eloquent testimony to the number and activity of the mosquitoes which infested these shores! I may tell you that I sent those nets to the Adelaide Exhibition, but they were never returned; so somebody in Adelaide has souvenirs of that murder. I annexed a magnificent barromundi, which gave us a splendid fish dinner that evening. Mr. Uhr having in the meantime got the cutter afloat, we were soon on board, and a start was made for home. So closed that incident.

#### —The Cape Brogden Massacre.—

"Early in the year 1892 the rumours of a terrible tragedy having taken place on the coast reached Port Darwin through the natives. The report was to the effect that a Malay proa had been wrecked and the crew killed by the niggers. I think it was in October of the same year that definite news was received in the shape of a report from Mr. E. O. Robinson to the Go-

vernment Resident at the time which confirmed the report that a massacre had taken place near Cape Brogden, some 40 miles to the eastward of Robinson's Camp, at Bowen Straits, and that Wandy Wandy, who had already served a long term for the murder of Robinson's mate, was the ringleader.

#### —After the Murderers.—

"A party under Inspector Foelsche was immediately fitted out to proceed to the spot to investigate. Inspector Foelsche's trump card in such matters was strategy, and it was felt that he would succeed in bringing matters to a successful issue. The inspector during his long residence in the Northern Territory had made a perfect study of the natives, and had an intimate knowledge of their ways. In fact among the niggers the name of Foelsche was a power in the land. When I saw the other day that this valuable old servant had the I.S.O. conferred upon him I was delighted, and I am sure no man deserved it more. Always liking to see something fresh and to add to my experiences, I obtained permission to accompany the party. In the coasting steamer Adelaide we first proceeded to Port Essington to see if we could pick up any of the niggers who knew anything about the murder, but we drew a blank, for Port Essington was entirely deserted. The old camp and surrounding land, which Robinson in the old days kept so neat, were quite overgrown, and the place seemed to me to look miserable and desolate.

#### —Witnesses Secured.—

"The steamer then proceeded to Bowen Straits Revenue Station, where Robinson had his camp. It was in charge of one of his men, a Malay named Tingha de Hhans. Here Inspector Foelsche was successful in securing witnesses. With two policemen I crossed to Crocker Island to search for an important witness. In landing we had to make our way through a long stretch of heavy mud, and in doing so I gave my right knee a bad wrench, the source of an old trouble, the result of an accident while hunting. I had the satisfaction of walking some eight miles with a bent leg, but we secured the man. A move was then made to Cape Brogden, where we anchored, there being a nice ocean swell on. During the afternoon an effort was made to land, but on account of the heavy surf it was not safe to do so. At daybreak next morning, things being a bit quieter, we had another try. The boat's anchor was dropped well out, and the boat was eased in stern first until just outside the surf. We all got ashore safely with the assistance of niggers. I had one under each arm. You may be sure we looked after our shooting irons."



A PICNIC IN THE JUNGLE.





## THE CAPE BROGDEN MASSACRE.

STORY BY AN EYE-WITNESS.

No. XVIII.

"When we landed at Cape Brogden," continued Mr. Searcy, "one of the niggers, Mangarippy by name, led us inland about one and a half miles from the beach to a beautiful piece of jungle close to a pretty little lagoon, covered with lilies. Our guide pointed to several places in the jungle where the earth had been disturbed, so work was started, and we soon disclosed six skeletons. So as to have evidence of the six bodies it was decided to take the skulls, which were considerably knocked about. The question of how to carry them, for they were not nice carrying, arose. I noticed that one of our niggers had on a pair of trousers. These were quickly unshipped and the ends of the legs tied up. We then put three skulls into each leg, and hung them round the nigger's neck, so the question of transport was soon settled. The rest of the bones were covered up again. While at work a buffalo cow and calf came to the lagoon for a drink, but having other business on hand we did not shoot. Close to where we landed were portions of the wrecked proa. The sea having gone down considerably our return was made without difficulty.

### —Prisoners Captured.—

"Soon afterwards the two policemen and several niggers landed to search for the murderers. To my great disgust I could not accompany them on account of my knee. After the search party had landed we proceeded to Malay Bay, where it was arranged for the party to come out. Next evening the police were seen moving out of the bush. Upon landing I found they had four men in chains, among whom was Wandy Wandy. As soon as he caught sight of me he cried out, 'Oh, Mr. Searcy, I no do it.' He and his mates were soon safely fixed up on the hatch of the steamer. The search party had had a fairly exciting time, so I blessed my luck again. Next morning another man was secured. The names of the prisoners were Wandy Wandy, Capoodur, Ingeewaraky, Dooramite, Minaedge, and Angareeda.

### —Mangarippy's Story of the Massacre.—

"This is the story Mangarippy afterwards told:—

I live sometimes at Bowen Straits, sometimes in other parts of that district. I remember going with other blackfellows, including all the prisoners, to Mandool, and seeing Malays there, and a proa which had been broken. There were six Malays. At first the Malays spoke, but we did not understand, and they then said "Tingha."

and pointed towards Bowen Straits. Blackfellow say:—"Take 'em," and then we started to show them the way to Bowen Straits. The prisoners Capoodur suggested that we should kill them, and another of the prisoners said the same. We took the Malays to a swamp, and stopped there to eat some cabbage palm. Many of the blackfellows carried boxes up from the beach. The Malays carried guns, but no boxes. They also carried revolver, bow, and arrows, and knives. After dinner they walked again towards Robinson's camp. Then two of the blackfellows, who were carrying boxes, Marakite and Ooolardno, ran away, taking the boxes with them. Then by-and-by all the blackfellows carrying boxes, including the prisoners, ran away, taking the boxes with them. I stopped a little while, and sang out to the blacks to come back, and then I ran away too. I took the box I was carrying back to the old camp at the swamp. When I got back to the camp all the prisoners were there, also Arramboon. We sat down a little while, and then the Malays came back. When the Malays came back they sat down along with the blackfellows. The blacks then talked among themselves about killing the Malays. All the prisoners said "Kill them." I said "You no kill 'em." Arramboon also said "No kill 'em." Then the blackfellows went into the bush and cut sticks, the Malays remaining sitting down at this camp. Minaedge was the first to talk about cutting sticks. They cut the sticks and came back to the camp. Then Wandy Wandy took away the knife, bow and arrows, and revolver from the Malay captain, and Dooramite took two guns away from a Malay man. Then they ran away a little distance and stop there. Capoodur then hit the captain on the back of the head with a stick. The captain was sitting down and died at once. Minaedge hit another Malay with a stick on the back of the head and killed him dead. Angareeda killed another same way. Ooolardno killed another with a tomahawk, hitting him across the face. Marakite killed another with a stick. One Malay ran away, and Ingeewaraky threw a stick at him, but did not hit him. Ooolardno then killed him. After they were all dead Ooolardno told me to go and spear the dead man, and I did. Then Marakite told Arramboon to go and hit the dead man with a stick, and he did. After the Malays were killed we made holes and buried the bodies. We put three bodies in one hole, another body in a hole close by, another close to that, and another a little distance away. We then went away to the beach. We went and burnt the proa. All the prisoners were there, also Arramboon. The blackfellows burnt the proa because they were afraid some whitefellow might see it. It was Capoodur that talked that way. We then went back to the swamp, where we killed the Malays. We took the Malays' boxes, also arms and other things, and went to another swamp, where we slept for the night. It was in the afternoon that we burnt the proa. Next day we went to a fresh-water creek called Wark. I saw Prince, Larrikin, and Big Jack at Wark some time afterwards. All the prisoners were there, also lubras and children. I saw Minaedge give Larrikin a box. Minaedge said to Larrikin that he had killed a Malay and got the box. Minaedge told Larrikin not to tell anybody that he had killed a Malay. Minaedge then gave Big Jack a knife and sarong. I was close

up when he gave it. He told Big Jack he killed the Malay and took the knife and arang from him.

—A Strange Proa.—

"The wrecked proa," explained Mr. Searcy—"a small one—was not one of the regular visitors, but a stranger as far as we could make out from the Aru Islands, and had evidently been blown down. I expect the dialect the Malay used was somewhat different from that to which our coast natives were accustomed, hence the difficulty they had in making themselves understood; but by their mentioning 'Tingha' showed they had gained some knowledge of the camp at Bowen Straits. Wandy Wandy was afterwards executed at Malay Bay, in the presence of as many of the natives as could be rounded up. The others received terms of imprisonment. Thus did Inspector Foelsche successfully carry out his work.

—Daly River Murders.—

"I daresay many will remember the murder of the white men at the Daly River Copper Mine some years ago, when the niggers were caught, and found guilty, but were liberated on some legal technicality. I knew one of the fellows (Long-legged Charlie, an unmitigated scoundrel) well, and had him out shooting with me several times on the Daly. It was always noticed that Long-legged Charlie, after he was liberated, would never go with one man or alone, and also that he would never walk in front. He had an idea, I expect, that an accident might happen, and I honestly believe that he was just about right. There was a very interesting story in 'Blackwood' some months ago, the scene in which it is laid evidently being the Daly River. In this story Long-legged Charlie seems to have received his deserts, but not in the orthodox way."

## ROBBERY OF OPIUM.

### A COLLECTION OF RELICS.

#### No. XIX.

After the effects of the Christmas dinner had worn off I caught the car and went over to Mr. Searcy's home at Gilberton. The afternoon was spent in Mr. Searcy's den, which by reason of the many relics of the Northern Territory which hang on the walls has a distinct atmosphere of the Orient about it. We smoked our pipes, and Mr. Searcy's thoughts appropriately turned to the subject of stolen opium. He said:—"I once had a trip up country on duty. It was in connection with a robbery of opium from the customs bond in Port Darwin. I had about a fortnight's riding over the goldfields. I visited every Chinese store, and counted and sealed the tins of opium in the possession of the storekeepers; for, from information I had gained before leaving Darwin, I knew fairly well what each man ought to have. The idea was that if unsealed tins were offered for sale the presumption would be that they were either part of the loot or were smuggled. Some one, presumably Chinese, had broken into the customs bond in the railway yard, forced open the large iron chest in which the opium was stored, and taken four cases. Not a sound had been heard, although four or five massive (hubb locks had been broken open. In the bond we had a small ship's magazine, the appearance of which I expect led the robbers to imagine it contained something valuable, for that was taken also. It was afterwards found in the mangroves close to the bond. It

had been forced open, but the contents, a few explosives, had not appealed to the thieves, for we found these also. We never recovered any of the stolen opium, in spite of the strict watch which was kept and the searching high and low.

—Chinese Sampan Suspected.—

"Some suspicion was aroused in connection with the Chinese sampans trading on the coast, so one night I went outside the heads in the steamlaunch, drifting out with the last of the ebb tide, and lay off there all night. At daybreak we sighted a big sampan running out before a strong southeaster. The tide had turned again, and she had a strong ebb in her favour. We immediately gave chase, the launch going for all she was worth. Not the least notice was taken of us until we got fairly close, which we did after a bit of a struggle. The sampan then hove to, but as she did we saw a case go over the side. Having great way on, it was some time before we could make a search, which was done without any satisfactory result, the case, of course, having disappeared. The incident was most suspicious, and I have little doubt that the case which was thrown overboard was part of the spoil. If it was the opium, it must have made the crew very sick to have to get rid of it in the way they did. Of course we did not find anything in the sampan."

—Relics of the Northern Territory.—

After a refreshing cup of tea I inspected

Mr. Searcy's curiosities. There were the long pods of the Queensland bean, the fruit of the baobab, as big as an emu egg, from the tree under which Gregory the explorer camped on the Victoria River, woomeras from Port Essington, a photograph of Stuart's tree, framed in a piece of wood taken from a branch of the memorable landmark, and a human skull picked up outside the police camp on Mount Mc-Minn. A piece of blood-stained jagged spear from Melville Island is the memento of a tragedy. A party of whites were on the island, and a mainland blackboy they had with them was speared by the wild niggers. The weapon went right into the unfortunate boy's body, and Mr. Searcy possesses the piece which was sawn off the spear close to the flesh. The victim did not live long. Two teeth, four inches long, taken from a dead alligator near Stuart's tree, give one an idea of the fearful damage the monster could have done with its jaws. Two Malay knives are relics of the Cape Brogden massacre. The portion of the main beam of the old Flying Cloud, which contained the official number and the tonnage hangs over the mantelpiece. The immense tusk of a dugong, articles made from tortoiseshell and pearl shell, curious fossils, and several ugly weapons of the swordfish, have all a personal interest for Mr. Searcy. A number of pencil sketches by a half-caste named Flannagan, who was executed for murder, are highly prized. Flannagan killed a man on the Victoria River over a game of cards, and he drew the sketches while he was under sentence of death. His fancy seemed to run in the direction of horses and bushmen. One sketch with Flora Valley written across it would greatly interest Mr. R. T. Maurice, the explorer, who visited the place on his journey across the continent from Fowler's Bay to Wyndham. The sketches are reminding of, although they show a great improvement on, the primitive art of the earliest races. On the verandah were hanging buffalo horns and turtle shells.

#### —Earliest Settlement.—

A bit of brick from Melville Island, and made about 1825, recalled the military settlements on the northern shores of Australia. "I wonder how many school

children, or, for that matter, the grown people," remarked Mr. Searcy, "know anything about the settlements at Fort Dundas, Raffles Bay, and Port Essington. The Portuguese are supposed to have sighted the coast between the years 1512 and 1542. The Dutch followed between the years 1605 and 1628, and in the latter year they endeavoured to form a settlement on the north-west coast of Australia. This ended most disastrously, and in a fearful massacre, the story of which is splendidly told by W. J. Gordon in his novel, 'The Captain-General.' Dampier visited the coast in 1688. There are legends that gold was found on the northern shores, and that the Portuguese or Spaniards came down to search for it. As bearing upon the discovery of gold in the Northern Territory, I may mention that on some maps a part of the country is named "Terra Arafura," a name taken presumably from the adjoining Arafura Sea, but I am given to understand that there is an old map in the British Museum on which this Territory is named "Terra Aurifera," indicating that the presence of gold in those parts was known in remote times. In support of the fact that there were ancient visitations to the coast, I may mention a discovery made by a man named Peter Erickson, who went in for tropical agriculture in Port Darwin. He once proceeded to the north-west for the purpose of pearling, and landed at Cape Bougainville, a most notorious place for bad niggers, to search for water. Erickson, who was fortunate enough to find a stream of fresh water, also discovered an ancient cannon. The idea is that it was mounted here for the protection of ships while they were watering. Erickson gave the cannon away for a compass to a fellow-countryman, who took it to Norway or Sweden. When a boy I read a book called 'Oliver Ellis,' in which mention was made of a sunken Spanish galleon, from which the hero of the story procured great wealth. While on my voyages down the coast I had this novel in my mind, and I did a lot of looking for treasure until I realized that the scavengers of the seas, the Malays, had been about 150 years in advance of me. The Red Gauntlet, about the best yacht of her day, was wrecked to the eastward of Trepan Bay, and the Malays did not leave much of her."

## EARLY MILITARY SETTLEMENTS.

### AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT.

#### No. XX.

Mention of the early military settlements on the north shore of Australia set me hunting up historical records dealing with

their establishment. Several years ago, in some able articles by the late Aeneas J. Gunn on "Pioneering in Northern

Australia," the writer said:—"In 1820 Capt. King, in the ill-found 80-ton cutter *Mermaid*, with no little heroism, boldly explored the coast, ventured where it seems almost a miracle he should have reached, and a still greater marvel that he should ever have escaped to recount his adventures. On his recommendation successive attempts at colonization under unpractical military rule were made in 1824 at Fort Dundas and Raffles Bay, Melville Island, and subsequently some years later at Port Essington in Arnheim's Land. All in a few years languished, and were abandoned, owing to want of the requisite experience in their government, thereby casting a damning stigma on the Northern Territory, which is only now wearing off." Melville Island was discovered in 1818 by Capt. Philip P. King, who in 1818-1822 surveyed the north coast of Australia, and afterwards published "A Narrative of a Survey of the Inter-tropical and Western Coasts of Australia, performed between 1818 and 1822." Obviously enough the expedition missed Port Darwin, which was discovered by Capt. Stokes, of the *Beagle*, in 1839, and named after his friend the able naturalist, Charles Darwin.

—Fort Dundas.—

It was not until some two years after the completion of Capt. King's survey that H.M.S. *Tamar* was dispatched by the Admiralty for the purpose of choosing a suitable site on the northern coast of Australia for the establishment of a convict settlement. The *Tamar* arrived at Port Jackson on July 24, 1824, and in less than a month sailed thence on her mission, having on board a detachment of the 3rd Regiment, a party of the Royal Marines, and 45 convicts. A landing was made at Port Essington; but, after a vain search for permanent fresh water, the idea of settling at this place was abandoned. Lieut. Roe, of the *Tamar*, in a letter to his former commander, Capt. King, gives the following particulars concerning the founding of the settlement at Port Cockburn:—"Light winds retarded our arrival, and it was not before the 28th that we brought up close to Luxmore Head, in St. Asaph Bay. Possession was taken with the same forms as at Port Essington, and we commenced a strict search for water in every direction, but with no success. At the expiration of five or six days a small river and plenty of water were discovered on Melville Island, abreast of Harris Island, and an eligible situation for the intended new settlement being discovered near it, the ships were removed thither on October 2, 1824, and parties landed to commence operations with axe and saw. The projection of land fixed upon for the site of a town was named after the commandant (Capt. Barlow); the cove was named King's Cove, after yourself, as the original discoverer of the strait; and that part of Apsley Strait, between Luxmore Head

and Harris Island, received the name of Port Cockburn in honour of Vice-Admiral Sir George Cockburn, G.O.B. All disposable hands being employed in clearing the point we were speedily enabled to commence the erection of a fort, 75 yards in length by 50 wide, to be built of the trunks of the felled trees, and to be surrounded by a ditch 10 ft. wide and deep. On the memorable October 21 our quarter-deck guns were landed and mounted, the colours were hoisted for the first time, and the work was named Fort Dundas under a royal salute from itself. Quarters were constructed within the walls of the fort for the accommodation of the officers, and about 30 huts of various kinds were erected and thatched with rushes for the soldiers and convicts. A deep well was sunk near the fort; a good substantial wharf ran out into the water, and as soon as a commissariat storehouse was finished, all the provisions were landed from the *Countess of Harcourt* and secured there. The soil in the neighbourhood of the settlement being exceedingly good, gardens were cleared and laid out, and soon produced all kinds of vegetables. In our stock we were rather unfortunate, for of six sheep that were landed for the purpose of breeding five died—supposed from the effect produced by eating some pernicious herb in the woods. Pigs, ducks, and fowls seemed, however, in a fair way of doing well, and had increased considerably since they were landed; but great inconvenience was experienced for want of some horses or draught oxen, which would not only have materially expedited the work in hand, but spared the men much fatigue and exposure. But the works proceeded with such spirit and alacrity that we were enabled to sail for Bombay on November 13 without exposing the new settlement either to the jealousy of the Malays or the mischievous attack of the natives. Not one native made his appearance before the early part of November, when, as if by signal, a party of about 18 on each shore communicated with us on the same day, and were very friendly, although exceedingly suspicious and timid. They would not venture within the line of the outer hut, and always came armed, but laid aside their spears and clubs whenever friendly signs were made. These Indians made repeated signs for hatchets, and although they had stolen two or three, it was considered desirable to gain their goodwill by giving them more. They were of course much pleased, but the next day axes, knives, and sickles were taken by force from men employed outside the settlement, upon which they were made to understand that until these articles were restored no more would be given. This course being persevered in by us, they seized these implements on every occasion that presented itself, so that it was found necessary to protect our working parties in the woods by a guard; the result of which was that the natives threw their spears



COCOANUT PALM AVENUE, BOTANIC GARDEN, PORT DARWIN.



whenever resistance was offered, and the guard was obliged to fire upon the aggressors. Open acts of hostility having now been committed, and the natives increasing daily in numbers, to upwards of 100 round the settlement, a good lookout was kept upon them, but not sufficiently to prevent about 60 of them surprising five of the marines in a swamp, cutting rushes, and throwing their spears among them. Their salute was immediately returned, and they disappeared without any damage having been done on either side. At the same minute, however, reports of musketry were heard at our watering place and garden, and proved to be in repelling an attack that about 40 natives had made upon our jolly boat watering, and two men cutting grass. One of the natives was shot dead at 10 yards distance, while in the act of throwing his spear, and our people thought that several others were wounded, as they disappeared, making most strange noises, and have not been near us since. One of the spears thrown upon the last occasion had 16 barbs to it, but, in general, they were merely scraped to a sharp point, without even one barb, and were not thrown with anything like precision or good aim."

—A Prophecy.—

When the Tamar left Lieut. Roe considered the settlement to be in a very forward state, and ventured on a prophecy:—"Such is the state of the settlement of Fort Dundas, which at some future time must become a place of considerable consequence in the Eastern world. The soil and climate of Melville and Bathurst Islands are capable of growing all the valuable productions of the East, principally spices, and many other equally important articles of trade; it is conveniently placed for the protection of ships passing to our Indian possessions from Port Jackson, and admirably situated for the purposes of mercantile speculation."

—Failure and Abandonment of Settlement.—

Fort Dundas was, however, doomed to failure. Towards the end of 1827 Mr. Campbell, who was appointed commandant of Melville Island in August, 1826, represented to the Governor of New South Wales the disadvantages under which the settlement laboured, among them the fact that at that time the island was out of the direct line of trade—no traders of any nation whatever had come near it. Port Darwin had not then been discovered. The main object of the Government in establishing the settlement—opening up commercial intercourse with the Indian archipelago—had, he pointed out, been completely frustrated. Mr. Campbell's relations with the island ceased during 1827, and we have to turn to another author—Mr. G. Windsor Earl, M.R.A.S., linguist of the North Australian Expedition and Commissioner of Crown Lands for Port Essington—for a few lines to complete the story of this unhappy garrison. In his work "Enterprise in Tropical Australia," published in 1846, he relates that Capt. Stirling, H.M.S. Success, was dispatched from Sydney in 1827 to found another settlement at Raffles Bay, on the mainland, 13 miles east of Port Essington. He took three transports, conveying a detachment of troops, some convicts, stores, and implements. The garrison at Melville Island remained during two years subsequent to the occupation of Raffles Bay. The establishment was then (1829) broken up, and the stores removed to the latter settlement, which was also, according to Mr. Campbell, deserted in the same year, though Mr. Earle concludes:—"The settlement at Raffles Bay proved as prosperous as that at Melville Island proved the reverse." But all the authorities agree that Fort Dundas, Melville Island, was in 1829 abandoned without regret by its garrison to the treacherous natives.

## FORT DUNDAS AND PORT ESSINGTON.

VISITED BY MR. ALFRED SEARCY.

No. XXI.

"In company with the late Mr. Gunn," said Mr. Searcy, "I visited Fort Dundas some years ago in one of the pearling luggers. We found it an interesting and lonely spot. The old settlement was formed on Melville Island, in Apsley Straits, which run between that island and Bathurst Island. The tide rages through these straits at a terrible rate. We had reason to remember this, for it was night when we left the straits, but before we were clear we got mixed up in a lot of coral reefs. The tide was so strong that our craft was

simply rolled, dragged, and bumped over the lot. If she had not been a well-built pearling lugger the bottom would soon have been ripped out of her. We eventually anchored, with the other pearling boats, off Garden Point. Early next morning parties were sent ashore for wood, one man in each boat at least being armed, the coloured crews of the luggers having a most wholesome dread of the Melville Island natives. Four of us started in dingys for Barlow Point to have a look for Fort Dundas.



—After Seventy Years.—

'Landing on some very slippery rocks we made our way through the mangroves up a short rise, and then saw what we at first took for a watercourse. Upon following it round, however, it dawned upon us that it was a real moat, with earthworks and bastions above it. This was Fort Dundas, constructed some 70 years before. It seemed impossible to imagine that on those walls soldiers kept their weary watch—soldiers in their tightly buttoned red coats and stiff leather stocks—for it was in the days of Brown Bess, stocks, martinetts, and stiff shakos. Following a walled road-way out of the pit, we walked inland through parklike country, some of the trees being very fine. About half a mile away we came upon the ruins of what had evidently been a very substantial building. We put it down as a church, as there were several places near it, marked out with stones, which looked like graves. After breakfast we landed on the north side of Garder Point to look for the garden. The landing was on a lovely sandy beach, with fairly open country at the back of it. Close by there was a little rivulet of water running into the sea from under dense undergrowth, which rendered it deliciously cool and refreshing. We passed inland, but could find no traces of the garden beyond a heap of stones, which we thought the most likely spot. At the immediate point is a pretty dense jungle, with some grand timber in and around it. Wandering up the beach later in the evening I found two heaps of bricks, evidently the work of the old settlers. The outside ones were black and weather-beaten, but inside they were as bright as the day when they were made. The bricks were of poor quality through the clay being unsuitable.

—Port Essington.—

"I always looked forward to my visits to Port Essington with great delight, for besides the good shooting and hunting there were the old associations of the place to think about. In 1838 two men-of-war put into Port Essington with people to form a settlement, one of the boats having previously called at Port Adelaide for marines. In 1849 a man-of-war called and removed the settlers. Mr. T. Gill, I.S.O., the Under Treasurer, has kindly supplied me with the following interesting particulars:—H.M.S. Alligator, Capt. Sir J. Gordon Bremer, C.B., K.C.H., arrived Holdfast Bay July 10, 1838, and took marines left by H.M.S. Buffalo to Northern Australia (Port Essington), and also Governor Hindmarsh to Sydney.—S.A. Register, July 14, 1838. H.M.S. Alligator and H.M.S. Britomart took marines to Port Essington and established a settlement there in November, 1838. Settlement abandoned in December, 1849. H.M.S. Meander removed the garrison to Sydney and destroyed the buildings.—The N.T. of S.A., Adelaide, 1863. The ruins of the old military settlement were always a

source of great attraction to me, and I was never tired of wandering about the place. The ruins looked more as if they were dismantled by man than by Father Time, and I only recently learned that such was the case. The magazine and brick kiln were still in a perfect state of preservation. Many of the posts of the old fences were standing, and portions of the landing stage remained. The old settlers made splendid bricks. A short distance inland was the old burial ground, nearly covered by dense tropical growth. There were several headstones, and one large monument. I think the latter was in memory of a sergeant of marines.

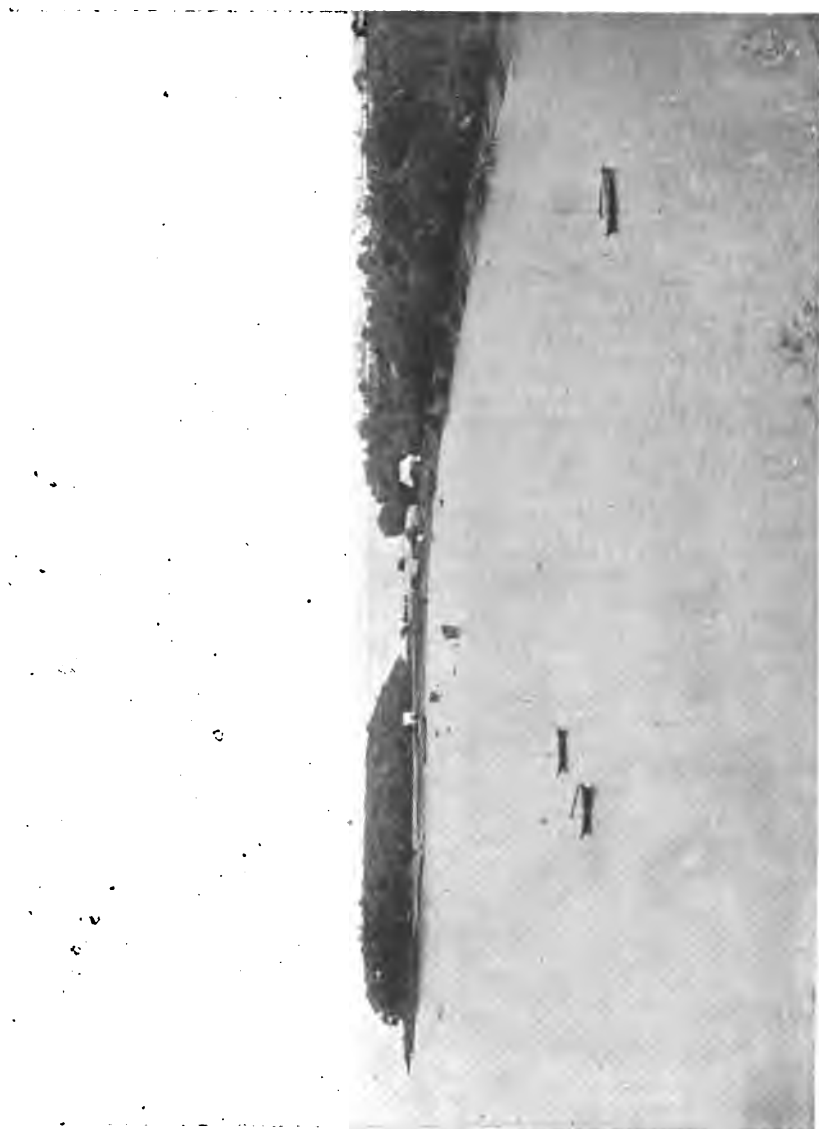
—"Flash Poll."—

"At Port Essington I always had a great friend to meet me in 'Flash Poll'—an ancient black dame, who was a young woman when the soldiers were stationed there, and a fine woman she must have been, judging from her appearance even when I saw her. Many a good yarn I had with her about the old days, and some funny stories she told. The old woman remembered the officers well, particularly the chaplain. Poll could still repeat like a parrot a prayer and sing a psalm; but I am bound to say that singing was not her strong forte. She had a great command of a certain sort of language, which she did not hesitate to use when her liver, for instance, was out of order. As sure as she said the prayer and sang the Psalm, she wound up with 'Give it tobacco, give it nobbler,' both of which she got at times. Whenever I said goodbye, Poll always rattled off a list of things she wanted. They would have fitted out a decent bush shanty. Once a year I did send her turkey red, tobacco, pipes, and a bottle of medicine. Flash Poll thought a lot of me, in fact, she promised me her skull, but I am afraid that interesting relic will never come my way. Her pet way of showing her grief at my departure was to ask for a knife to cut her head. Poll was a great hand at making hats out of leaves of a palm tree. The amount of work in one was enormous, and generally occupied about six months. I have to this day one of the hats that Poll made.

—Robinson's Camp.—

"The little house in which Robinson lived was built under some tamarind trees of great age. Many a bag of ripe fruit I took away. There was a shower bath, of which the camp generally was very proud. Picture to yourself an old beer barrel in the rafters of a small hut, a brass beer tap, and attached to the top a 2-lb boullie tin with several holes. After turning the tap on you sat down, for otherwise one might get tired, and waited. It became a fine art to dodge the drops so that they should not all land on one part of the body. It was a great comfort, however, and filling the barrel amused the niggers.





PORT DARWIN, SHOWING FORT HILL TO THE LEFT.

—Letter from "Buffalo Bill."—

"A few days ago I received the following letter from my old friend and comrade, Mr. E. O. Robinson:—Melbourne, November 24, 1904.—My Dear Searcy—I am sending you some particulars of early days at Port Essington. My first trip to the settlement was in 1874, when we went to look for Botrodale and Permain. A party under J. Lewis (now the Hon. J. Lewis, M.L.C.) went overland at the same time, and we met them at Port Essington, and later brought their horses to Darwin in our schooner Northern Light. Shortly after I formed a small company in Darwin for beche-de-mer fishing, and made my camp at Port Essington. It did not pay, and was abandoned after some six months. The next settlers were the Coburg Cattle Company. About 1876 Fred Dewar and three others took up 200 square miles between Raffles Bay and Mount Norris Bay. They shot 1,000 buffalo, and tanned them at the old settlement there. Four years ago their tan pits were still in good order. The schooner Kingston called at Raffles Bay, and took the leather to Sydney. One of the party accompanied the shipment, and that was the last heard of him or the buffalo leather. That broke up what has turned out a great industry, as over 50,000 buffalo have been shot since those days. I exported 23,000 hides in seven years. In 1896 Joe Cooper, Barney Flynn, Tom Madden, Jim Sedgewood, Billy (a kanaka), and Tinga (a Malay), shot 4,644 on Melville Island, since when there has been no work done in this place. About 1877 Wingfield and I took up Croker Island for a trepang fishing station. We grew some good tobacco there, but just as we had made a good homestead, had a nice piece of ground cultivated, and were getting along well, Wingfield was killed by the natives while I was in Port Darwin. It

was a knock for me on my return to find nothing but the cat to welcome me, the dwelling ransacked, and the poor old chap buried in the sand about six yards from the house. Part of his face was exposed, and the fowls were pecking at it. I had only two black boys with me, and the venture was given up. I then took charge of the Coburg Cattle Company's station, and stayed there four and a half years. I then removed to Bowen Straits. If you could get some of my old customs reports there should be some interesting reading. Popaham Bay was only a trepang station. It is interesting, as some day there will be a lighthouse on the hill on the western side there being good anchorage in the bay during the south-east monsoon, and in the night below Cape Don during the north-west monsoon. I have just been reading your alligator yarns in The South Australian Register, and good reading they are. Did you ever hear of the one that chased Stevens and myself? We were in a dingy at Castlereagh Bay, at the mouth of Glyde's Inlet. We were looking for the best channel at low water. The water was very muddy and discoloured. A monster suddenly appeared astern of the dingy. The niggers yelled, and down he went. The course of the dingy was promptly altered. Up came the monster just where the dingy should have been if it had been kept on its original course, and then he appeared just astern of us. The monster chased us for fully half an hour. I had only a revolver, and the niggers were so scared they would not keep the boat steady, so I did not get a shot. Guess I have not done so much writing for years. Every good wish to you all.—Yours faithfully, E. O. Robinson." Robinson's mate Wingfield was murdered by Wandy Wandy, who was subsequently executed for the leading part he played in the Cape Brogden massacre."

## THE SINGAPORE OF AUSTRALIA.

### PORT DARWIN.

#### No. XXII.

Port Darwin is an inlet of considerable size, available for all classes of vessels, there being not less than 7 fathoms in the approach with deeper water within. It is at present, and probably will continue, to be the principal port in the northern part of Australia. It is here that the submarine telegraph cables from Java are landed, and it is the port of call for the principal lines of steam vessels communicating with China, Singapore, Java, and India. In approaching Port Darwin from the eastward a course should be steered to pass westward of the shoal water that extends seaward of Lee and East Points, care being taken not to bring Lee Point to bear northward of East until Emery Point bears S.E., when the peaked bush hill on Middle Point is open of Emery Point bearing S.E. 43. steer

for it, which course will lead in the fairway westward of Middle ground and of Channel rocks. Give Emery Point a fair berth, and keep westward of the fairway line until Fort Hill bears east. In order to avoid the 2½ fathom patch lying one mile S.E. ½ S. from Emery Point. Course may then be altered for the anchorage off Fort Hill. When beating into the harbour having cleared the Middle ground, and Channel rock, Channel Island should not be shut in by Emery Point to avoid the dangers in Fanny Bay. Coming from the westward vessels are recommended to make Cape Fourcroy, the south-west point of Bathurst Island (to avoid Lorna Shoal of 4 fathoms and ground that has not yet been examined), and then shape course for Port Darwin, proper allowance being made for the

“tide, which runs very strong during spring. The stream of the rising tide sets to the eastward, and stream of falling tide to the westward. In standing across from Cape Fourcroy Charles Point will be sighted. The point may be known by its being the highest land on that part of the coast and by the lighthouse which stands upon it. It should not be approached within four miles, which distance from the shore should be kept until the peaked hill on Middle Point is only a little open of Emery Point, when proceed as from the eastward.—Australia Directory, vol. iii., published by order of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

“If you follow the above directions,” said Mr. Searcy, “you will find yourself in one of the finest harbours in Australia, a harbour into which the largest steamer afloat can enter at any state of the tide, which means something when it is remembered that the rise and fall at springs is at times upwards of 26 ft., the mean being 22 ft. 4 in. So sure as tomorrow follows to-day this magnificent harbour will be the Singapore of Australia, provided, of course, certain works are undertaken and restrictions removed.

#### —The Transcontinental Line.—

“The work I refer principally to is the transcontinental line, an undertaking which is bound to be carried out in time, thus connecting the two splendid ports of Augusta and Darwin. Would not Port Augusta then occupy the place among the ports of Australia which its geographical position and its great facilities for shipping justify? Port Darwin would become a port of vast importance, a position which it rightly ought to occupy. Under the altered conditions I speak of, and backed up by the great natural resources of the Territory, Darwin would be one of, if not the greatest, entrepot of trade in Australia. Consider for a moment if the railway was completed, and for the protection of British interests in the East troops were urgently required. One can realize the advantage of being able to rush them across Australia, and thence in fast steamers to their destination. When the time comes—and come it will—for Port Darwin to be fortified, it seems to me, as a layman, that it could be done with the greatest of ease and efficacy, and that it would be simply impossible for a hostile vessel to enter or get anywhere near the mouth of the harbour.

#### —Situation of Port Darwin.—

“What I particularly wanted to say about Port Darwin is that it seems to me that it ought, from its position, to be the principal port of shipment of horses to India. Just read the following table, and then glance at the map, and you will see in a moment how adjacent India is, and that the steaming would be through comparatively calm waters:—Brisbane to Calcutta via Singapore, 6,815 miles; Sydney to Calcutta via Singapore, 6,305 miles; Melbourne to Calcutta via Singapore, 5,740 miles; Ade-

laide to Calcutta via Singapore, 5,250 miles; Fremantle to Calcutta via Singapore, 3,872 miles; Port Darwin to Calcutta via Singapore, 3,450 miles; Melbourne to Calcutta direct via Cape Leeuwin, 5,660 miles; Melbourne to Calcutta via Torres Straits, 6,760 miles.

#### —Other Advantages.—

“As a port of shipment Darwin is an ideal place. That fact was proved by the large shipments of cattle to the East. That magnificent horses—equal to any in Australia—can be reared in the Territory is beyond dispute. The paper published some time ago by Capt. Cresswell, R.N., on the export of horses to India struck me as being most forcible, and I do trust that his idea may in the near future be carried out. The importance of the subject is very great, and every effort should be made to bring the matter before the public and those most concerned. The great rise and fall of the tide at Darwin has its advantages, for it enables vessels of large tonnage to be placed on the ‘hard’—in other words beached—for any necessary work that might have to be undertaken. There are several splendid spots in the harbour suitable for this purpose. I have seen such steamers as the *Airlie*, *Guthrie*, and *Memmair* on the hard, and important works carried out. In fact, these are natural docks in the harbour.

#### —Two Different Pictures.—

“It does seem strange at the first glance that the Northern Territory has not made greater progress and has such a sparse population. Just look at the islands of Java and Madura, not one-sixth the size of the Northern Territory, but which carry their teeming millions. The native population of these islands is now something over 30 millions. When I visited them some years ago the native population was 26 millions, and in addition there were 500,000 Chinese and 49,000 Europeans. At that time we had in the Northern Territory something like 1,700 Europeans, four or five thousand Asiatics, and a few thousand aboriginals. Of course I know that Java is the tropical garden of the world, and we cannot for a moment compare the Northern Territory as a whole to that island, but it is well known that our possession contains land equal in size to the islands of Java and Madura suitable for any sort of tropical agriculture. Then why should not the Northern Territory carry a few millions instead of lying neglected? Let those who are responsible answer the question. It cannot for a moment be supposed that with such lands, backed up by the finest cattle and horse-breeding country in Australia, the Northern Territory is to remain dormant, and the grand harbour of Port Darwin wasted—a harbour which Nature has provided with an admirable site for a town. It is healthy and naturally drained, being some 70 ft. above the sea level. Mr. J. C. Morpelt, Clerk of the Assembly, who has just



POINT CHARLES LIGHTHOUSE.



returned from England, on the voyage out met several officers connected with the Indian service. They seemed to have very little, if any, knowledge of such a place as Port Darwin. Needless to say that Mr. McPhett pointed out in strong terms the advantages of shipping horses to India from Darwin.

—Beautifying Port Darwin.—

"And why should not this magnificent harbour be made more beautiful, picturesque, and tropical in appearance than it is at present by planting on the numerous suitable spots adjacent to the sea cocoanut palms. We have sufficient evidence that the palms will grow in the splendid avenues in the botanic gardens under the superintendence of Mr. Nicholas Holtze, the curator. Spasmodic efforts were made many years ago to grow palms, but neglect, bush-

fires, and white ants proved too much for them. When I left Port Darwin there was only one of the palms left, and that was growing almost on the beach at Fanny Bay in spite of every adverse circumstance. If I had had my way every available spot in the harbour would have been planted with palms, and niggers would have been employed to look after them. The white ants would be the worst enemy to contend with, but constantly working the soil round the roots has a beneficial effect, for these pests do not like being disturbed. Many years ago, when the Young Australian was on the coast, nuts were planted at many spots between Darwin and the Roper. They did not grow; not, however, because of the white ants, but owing to the Myall niggers, who dug them up as fast as they were planted, and ate them."

## A GREAT TROPICAL COUNTRY.

### WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH IT?

No. XXIII.

"Speaking of tropical agriculture," continued Mr. Searcy, "some years ago the then Government Resident (the late Hon. J. L. Parsons) took some Chinese merchants, who represented large capital in Canton, up the Adelaide River to have a look at the land, with a view to rice-growing. I was one of the party, and I heard the merchants say the country was simply splendid, just the same as Saigon, and who has not heard of Saigon rice; but the labour question kills all idea of carrying out the work, although the money was there.

—Wonderful Country.—

"Just read this description of Florida Head Station, written in 1883 by Mr. D'Arcy Uhr:—

The homestead of Florida head station is situated on a bold ridge, the foot of which is encircled by a horseshoe lagoon, forming one of the most beautiful sites for a station that I have ever seen. The ends of the lagoon are connected by a substantial fence, thus enclosing a splendid paddock of about 120 acres. At the foot of the slope, below the station, and bordering the lagoon, a small garden had been formed, which, although only two years old, is a surprise in itself, for the growth of the various plants and trees has been simply marvellous. There are mulberry, orange, lemon, mango, pawpaw, and several other kind of fruit trees, cocoanut palms, bananas, pineapples, and numerous other fruits and vegetables. The soil is a black friable loam equal to anything I have seen in Australia. I know the best country in Queensland pretty well, and I confidently state I have seen nothing there to beat it. A crop of maize that I inspected, although only sown seven weeks before, was then over 7

ft. high, and the cobs gave promise of a most prolific crop. The plains around the station are covered with wild rice, and the Chinese gardener asserts that rice will do better here than in China or Saigon. The rainfall is pretty regular all the year through, and since the station has been formed there has never been more than two months without rain. The station paddock, although only of about 120 acres in extent, has carried a large quantity of stock, but the grass has never been known to be scarce in it. The country all around the station is alive with game and wild fowl, while the lagoon teems with a number of varieties of fish. Wild fowls' eggs may be obtained by the bucketful. About five miles S.S.W. of the station Lindsay's Mount Delight is a prominent object in the landscape. This ought to be magnificent sugar country, and is well worth the attention of sugar planters. Mosquitoes are the bane of one's existence here, keeping up their activity night and day, but the small "buffalo," or marsh "fly," so numerous in other parts of the Territory, is not known here, which must be a great boon to horses and cattle. White ants are almost unknown, those hitherto seen being the smaller, an less troublesome sort, which build their hills of black soil. The cattle I have seen look remarkably well and healthy. This portion of the country was surely never intended by Dame Nature to belong to the Northern Territory. It ought to be joined on to Queensland—in fact the soil is quite equal to anything in the Maryborough or Mackay districts, which are admittedly the pick of Queensland.

—The Truth About the Territory.—

"It is just as well to state the truth about the Northern Territory," continued Mr. Searcy. "I heard the other day that a gentleman who had resided many years



in our northern possession stated that that portion of the island continent was the healthiest country in the world, that malarial fever was a bogie, and that any tropical products could be produced successfully with European labour. I am afraid that that gentleman forgot that there are in the world a few other people who have experience of tropical countries and tropical life and production, and who if they saw or heard such statements would naturally ask why such a tropical paradise had been neglected so long and had developed into what is known as 'the white elephant'? They would at any rate imagine that there must be a screw loose somewhere.

—Tropical Australia.—

"Now it must be realized that we have a veritable tropical Australia, and the sooner that fact is understood the better. The conditions are just the same as obtain in other portions of the tropical world, the same ills have to be borne, and similar means are necessary for the development of the country. Why not recognise all the country to the north of the twenty-second parallel of latitude as 'tropical country,' and develop it under tropical conditions?"

—From a Health Point of View.—

"It must be remembered that portions of the Northern Territory are looked upon as supplying some of the hottest places in the world. It seems to me, in the circumstances, rather absurd to say that malarial fever is a bogie. As a matter of fact it does exist, especially during the early portion of the dry season. I firmly believe, however, that for a tropical country the Territory is one of the most healthy in existence,

and I know that Europeans, under certain conditions, stand the climate perfectly. Speaking for myself, during my 14 years' residence there I had splendid health, with only slight touches of fever; but it must be remembered that my work was on the coast, which is a great advantage. I was sorry enough to leave the Territory; in fact I would not have done so but that the health of my wife and children necessitated the change. The charm of a tropical life was fully developed in me, although in tropical Australia one has all the disadvantages of tropical life without the compensating advantages peculiar to the East. The gentleman I referred to I fancy must have spoken from his actual experiences, which were evidently gained on one of the cattle stations, and it is generally recognised that no more healthy places could exist, while the work peculiar to station life and droving are suitable for Europeans. I daresay more white men could be employed if it was not for the black boys, who are peculiarly adapted for the business, and are in many cases better than white men.

—Make the Trip!—

"Take my advice and pay a visit to Port Darwin—a most charming trip and a perfect eyeopener. Why, the cruise through the Barrier is worth the trouble itself, let alone the grand experience at the other end! From May to August the climate of Darwin is simply ideal. The magnificent steamers calling there now ought to attract excursionists, and another thing not to be overlooked is the fact that the return fare now is just what the single fare was in my time.

## TROPICAL FRUIT.

### ITS LUXURIANT GROWTH.

#### No. XXIV.

Mr. Alfred Searcy and myself were walking down the street together talking about the publication of the articles "In Northern Seas" in pamphlet form when we espied some fine fruit in one of the shop windows. When we reached Parliament House the clerk assistant of the Assembly said:—"I do not think that I have mentioned anything in reference to the tropical fruits grown in the Northern Territory. I prefer tropical fruit to that grown in temperate zones. When I have made that statement I have been called names. During all my long residence in the tropics I never tired of the fruit, although at times I longed for some of the southern sorts,

which it was impossible to import. Yet, when I had the opportunity of tasting them again, I was disappointed, and more than ever considered the tropical fruit the best. There are no indigenous fruits of any great value or particular flavour in the Northern Territory, consequently all the well-known tropical fruit trees had to be imported. The bananas, of which several varieties are grown, were simply perfection. I often wish now that I could secure a bunch ripened on the tree and hang up in the verandah as we did, so that you could help yourself and come again. The most delicious, I think, were those known as ladies' fingers, and some of the finest and

LUXURIANT TROPICAL GROWTH NEAR PORT DARWIN.





most delicate of these came from a tree at the back of the late Mr. J. G. Knight's old quarters, a tree which renewed itself from suckers year after year. The original, I have been told, was planted by the late Surveyor-General (Mr. G. W. Goyder) when he was in Darwin.

#### —Pineapples and Pawpaw Apples.—

"The pineapples grown by the Chinese gardeners principally on the side of the stony ridges forming the gullies, I believe, are unsurpassed. Globetrotters have often informed me that in no part of the world had they tasted such exquisite fruit. I have eaten those of Singapore and Queensland, and I honestly say there is no comparison. To eat a Port Darwin pineapple, one with the rough skin, properly trimmed by a China boy, whereby every seed is removed, tearing the edible portion from the stem with a silver fork, with just a dash of salt—well, it was an experience I never tired of. The papya or pawpaw apple grew anywhere and quickly, but the white ants played havoc with them. The stems are nice and soft, and I am certain must have been an agreeable change from the hard things the ants used to tackle indiscriminately. The papya is a prolific bearer—that is, the female tree—the male tree bears long sprays of creamy white blooms delicately scented—and when in fruit presents a peculiar appearance. The fruit grows in clusters round the stem, and is surmounted by an umbrella-shaped mass of large leaves. I have never experimented, but it is placed to the credit of the papya that the toughest of meat can be rendered tender by hanging it under the leaves for a few hours, or by wrapping it up in them. What a blessing it would be here sometimes! I have already mentioned that the flying foxes are particularly partial to this fruit. I have often in the early morning gone among the trees at my quarters to pick out a fine fruit I had spotted the previous day, only to find that it had been hollowed out during the night. The words used were enough to make the tree look sad. Cut the papya in half lengthways, scoop out the seeds, and then, with a dash of sherry and a spoon, you have something to think about.

#### —Other Fruits.—

"The custard apple I soon tired of. It was too rich and sweet, but the soursop, a peculiar fruit which has an American name not used in polite society, was always a favourite with me. I always understood that the only way a mango could be eaten was while in a bath. I never found that actually necessary, but it was just as well to wash your face after a good struggle with them. What a delicious thing a good mango is, to be sure. When you get the chance, have them off the ice. Years ago there was at Port Essington a very magnificent mango tree. It was planted by the soldiers when stationed there. Before I went to Port

Darwin I believe for years many tons of fruit were brought up from there. At last the white ants attacked the tree, and I understood in the efforts made to combat with them it was destroyed. When I was at Port Essington there were numerous young trees in bearing, but I never secured properly ripe fruit. The niggers liked mangos, and generally got there first. I have heard the mangosteen called the queen of fruit, and it deserves the name. I never seemed to be able to get outside enough. When you get a good ripe pumelo you have a treat, especially if it has been in the icechest all night, or out in the air with a damp cloth round it for a time. Limes do well there, but for hot grog I prefer the good old lemon. Oranges also flourish.

#### —A Delicious Drink.—

"For a delicious early morning drink I recommend you to try the milk from the green cocoanut. Cut off the top of the nut with a sharp knife, pour the contents into a glass, and you have a drink fit for a king. The cocoanut must be cold. When in Singapore I was a bit seedy, and consulted a doctor. Part of his prescription was cocoanut milk first thing in the morning. I took to it most kindly, and often wish now that I had a chance of repeating that portion of the cure. Have you ever eaten the dry lychee? Just take a hint if ever you purchase any! Pick those which have the appearance of having been pressed between the thumb and finger in preference to those which are perfectly round, and you will soon find the difference. The fresh lychee is very fine. I did not care much for guavas fresh, but made into jelly they are a dream. Jack fruit is also grown. It is similar to the durian, which it is advisable to partake of in the open air on account of the obnoxious smell which emanates from it. When in Singapore I tackled the durian, and delicious it was. The smell was powerful indeed, but once having tasted the inside one forgets the objectionable aroma. The jujube, granadilla, common passion fruit, and mulberries also thrive well.

#### —Melons.—

"I do not remember seeing anywhere such magnificent watermelons as I found on the Daly River. We were camped at the sugar plantation, and as early as the mosquitoes would permit in the morning we went into one of the swamps and secured a few ducks. On the way back we passed the melon patch, and picked an enormous one. When we had finished with half of it the rind looked in size more like a baby's bath. Talking of watermelons reminds me of a resident in Darwin who followed some American recipe he had read. He cut a small hole in a fine melon, into which he allowed two bottles of whisky to soak. It was not bad, and it struck me that it was the easiest way of imbibing whisky without knowing it I ever heard of or tried. What

magnificent rock melons we used to get, to be sure. I'll just tell you how to eat the mashmelon as a wind up, for I think I have given a fair idea of tropical fruits procurable in Darwin. The mashmelon is ready for use when it splits open; remove the seeds and skin, mash up the inside with sugar, and add a dash of rum, sherry, or lemon juice, and then proceed to business. Now all these fruits were grown, as I have said, in the Territory, either in the Botanic Garden or by the Chinese gardeners. Dr. Maurice Holtze did splendid work in introducing the bulk of the fruits, and these efforts have been continued by his son, Mr. Nicholas Holtze.

#### —In the Future.—

The area suitable for the growth of pineapples is simply unlimited, so in the future when circumstances are different, a nice little industry may be established in preserving them. What an eyeopener it will be for the southern people, when they see trainloads of pineapples, bananas, and other tropical products delivered in Adelaide. Such will be the case when the transcontinental line is built, which must come in the near future. From the above you may judge I was a great fruit eater. In my quarters I always had a table standing in line containing kerosene, to prevent the small black and red ants from invading it, carrying plenty of fresh fruit. This was kept supplied by a Chinese gardener without reference to me. The small ants referred to are an awful nuisance. Where they come from and the quick appearance they can put in are a marvel. If anything is calculated to rouse one out of his bed and compel him to shake it is these ants. If you happen to put on a garment with some of them on it they make things lively.

#### —A Fair Start.—

"In the cool of the early morning, the most charming part of the day, it always seemed to me, with the banana birds just commencing their song, I used to wander out with my hands full of fruit as a 'fair start.' This was completed by a cup of coffee with an egg beaten up in it. I think the expression of 'fair start' is very good. The first time I heard it used in this connection was at Port Essington in 1883, when camped there with my comrades Robinson and Pinder. Robinson would turn out of his shanty the first thing in the morning and yell for us fellows to partake of a 'fair start.' He always had a quart bottle in his hand, which he shook vigorously. It contained fresh eggs, and the shaking was a substitute for beating. Our 'fair start' consisted of rum, about three fingers, the glass being filled up with shaken egg—and excellent it was. Always avoid knocking about in the tropics in the early morning on an empty stomach.

#### —To Beat an Egg.—

"I'll tell you how we used to beat up our eggs when we had no swizzle stick or

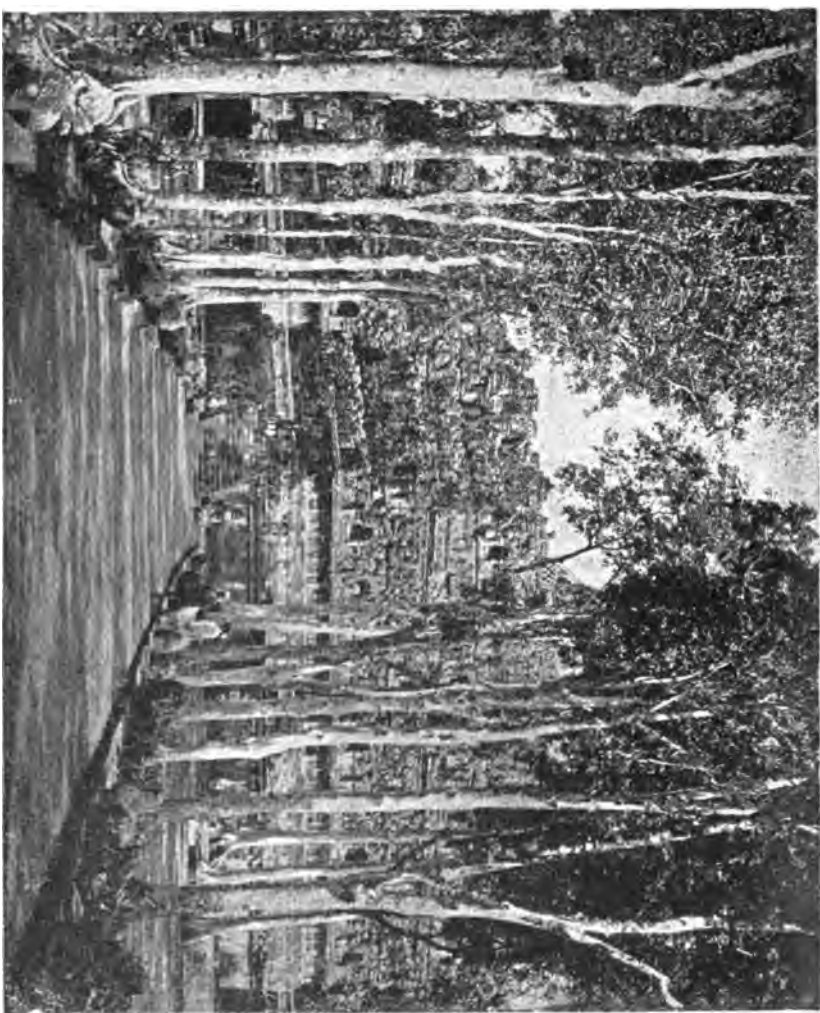
fork. The eggs were broken into a glass, cup, or pannican, as the case might be. This was covered with a piece of paper, and a cloth thrown over the vessel. We would take two or three turns with the cloth under the glass and shake for a few moments. The result is equal to any patent beater, and silent at that. Take care you don't twist the cloth too tightly, or you may break things, for the twist is a powerful purchase. I remember once when Charlie Mann and myself were out shooting we struck a Chinese garden, and having something in the 'baby' we negotiated with the Celestial for the other necessary ingredients to make a 'corpse reviver,' it being too late for a 'fair start.' John supplied a tin pannican, some eggs, and, after a lot of searching, some old Chinese accounts. With these and my handkerchief I did the deed. It was a great success. The Chinaman watched our proceedings with great interest, and I am sure if he tried the same dodge with some samshu or cockroach gin he must have found it a decided improvement.

#### —Vegetables.—

"The residents in Darwin were all supplied with fresh vegetables, and for this blessing they had to thank the Chinese gardeners, who simply worked like slaves in their gardens, which was necessary when the dry season was taken into consideration. It would have been a poor lookout if it had not been for the patience and perseverance of the Chinaman. Good as the vegetables were, I'll own in this particular to have a preference to those of temperate climates, although I often think a good meal of sweet potatoes or yams would not go bad.

#### —Mosquitoes.—

"The expression 'when the mosquitoes allowed us' is no figure of speech, but an actual fact. From my experience I must say that the Daly was easily first for mosquitoes. At the same time for lovely beaches, bird life, and alligators, it was ahead of the other streams. My people living on the river I had been informed that nearly all the year round, if you desire any sort of peace and comfort from sunset until it rises again, you must either have a mosquito proof room, turn into a sleeping net, or get to leeward of a fire making a dense smoke. The night before we visited the plantation we camped at the Daly Mine, and acting on experience gained I rolled up my blanket and net in the morning so that the fact of unrolling them fixed up my camp. For real out and out persevering, ambitious, cool, unstanding customers commend me to Daly River mosquitoes. If you happen to let half a dozen of these pests into your net I believe it is worse than being in the thick of them. Let part of your body touch the net and those on duty outside get into action, and you quickly shift your position. But those inside are just all over you at once. A chun who was with me on the Daly had not taken the precautions I had,



ANCIENT RUINS OF JAVA, INDICATING GREAT AGE OF SETTLEMENT.



so he had to straighten out his blankets before turning in. He had not been inside his net long when I heard some lurid language and the striking of matches. For the next 10 minutes I had the pleasure of watching a regular circus. My chum was striking matches and chasing a few mosquitoes round the net. When he got one in a corner he applied the flame to it. After about 10 minutes hard going, a box of matches wasted, and language beyond description employed, he cleared the net. Daly River mosquitoes, however, do not take notice of strong language, they are used to it. I knew a man who was so disgusted by the action of a few mosquitoes that he sneaked into his net that he rolled out of it in a state of nature, saying—"If you want to have a feed, have it," and they did. The wife of the manager I did indeed pity, for she was in an awful state from the attacks of sandflies and mosquitoes. When I saw her she was walking about in flourbags to keep off the pests. A son, a boy of 15, went with us

to the swamp. On his return his mother said, 'Now you will have the fever again; just take a good dose of quinine.' Mosquitoes again."

#### —A Gentle Hint.—

"For some time we had in the Customs a great stalwart Javanese named Mingo, who also acted as office boy. He had at one time been a soldier, and fought in Achcen. Mingo lived at my quarters for a time. One evening we had a dance, which I suppose disturbed Master Mingo, for getting tired of the frivolity he suddenly appeared on the verandah with a lighted lantern and a clock. He coolly walked round, and deliberately held the lantern and clock in the face of each guest in turn. The timepiece indicated half-past 2. Our friends, who fully appreciated Mingo's gentle hint, immediately departed. Having recalled the incident I will take advantage of the gentle hint and close the story of my experiences."

#### "IN NORTHERN SEAS."

To the Editor,

Sir—In common with so many of your readers, I have followed with deep interest the series of interviews with Mr. Searcy on our Northern Territory, and it is no exaggeration in saying they provide delightful reading, more particularly to those who, like myself, have seen much bush life. As so vast and valuable a possession as the Territory cannot much longer remain in its present undeveloped condition, I venture to suggest that on the completion of the series they be printed in pamphlet form, for, containing as they do authentic records that cannot be obtained from other sources, the compilation would be a most valuable one in the near future. Mr. Searcy has certainly enlightened us on many subjects, and I must confess to have gained knowledge of the habits of Malays, buffaloes, alligators, &c., since reading your interviews, but would it be encroaching on your space if this gentleman were asked to give an expression of opinion on the history of the dingo. The first settlers to the Northern Territory found this pest in great numbers there, and many authorities, seeing that the dingo does not possess the pouch of other Australian animals, appear to think he is a foreigner, and may have been

landed by the Dutch or others who touched our northern shores in ages past?

I am, Sir, &c.,

NATIVE.

From "The Register" (S.A.), January 6th, 1905.

[We are glad to be able to inform our correspondent, and many others who have personally made the same enquiry of Mr. Searcy that the articles will be published in pamphlet form, together with a map and illustrations. With reference to the theory as to the origin of the dingo, Mr. Searcy says he has not heard it advanced before, although he is particularly interested in it when he remembers that communication took place between the Portuguese and the Chinese centuries ago, and that it is generally supposed that the Portuguese visited the Australian coast about the same time as they took Macao, in 1586. The marvellous ruins of Java are a further evidence of visitations of an enlightened people to the, at any rate, vicinity of the northern coast of Australia as early as the twelfth century. Mr. James Edmond, the editor of The Sydney Bulletin, who was in Adelaide on Thursday en route for India on a holiday trip, stated that he had several times heard the theory advanced, and that he was inclined to believe that the Australian dingo is descended from the chow dog, or something akin to it.—Ed.]





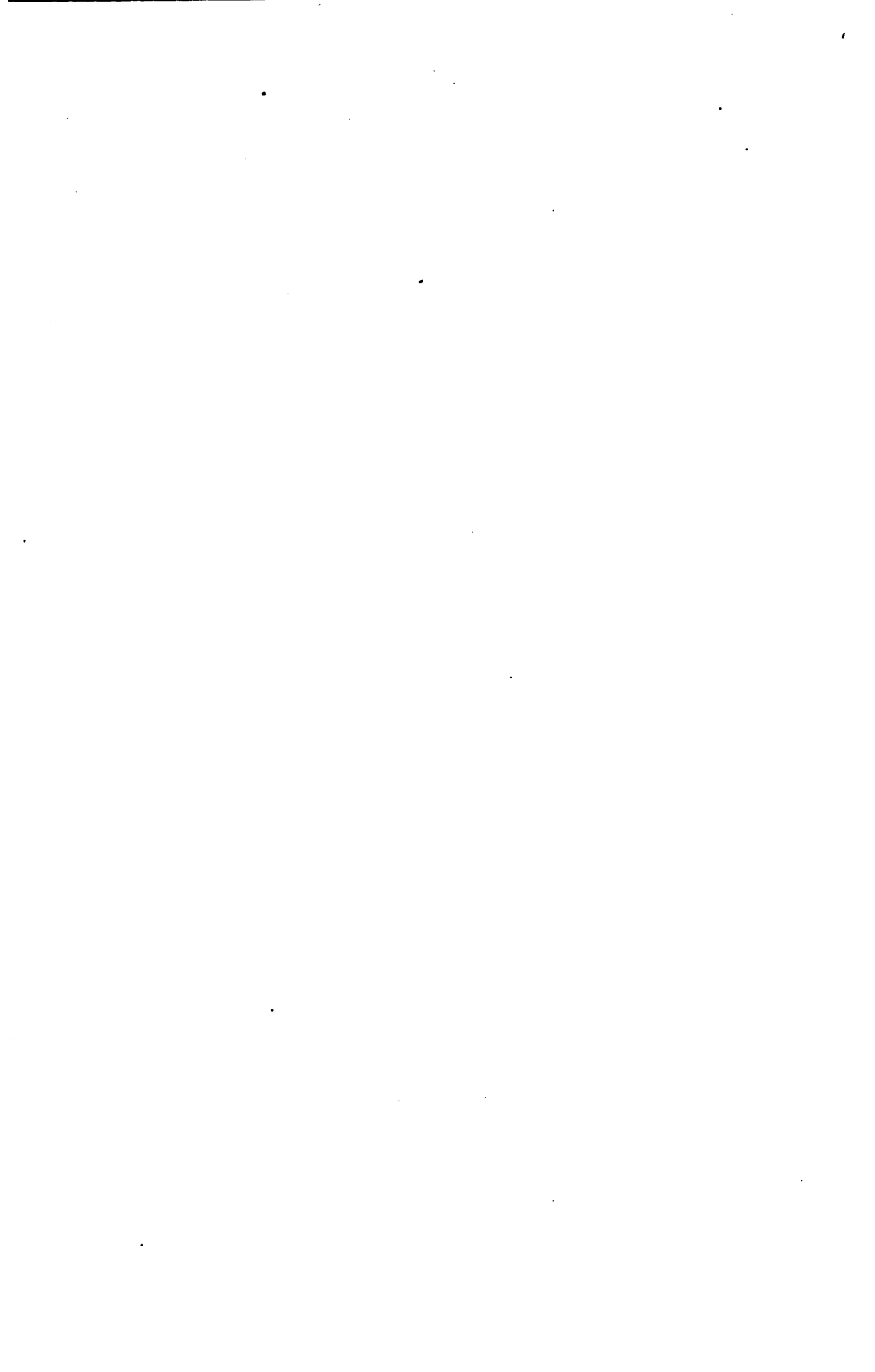


CHINESE WOODCARTER, PORT DARWIN. INDIAN BUFFALOES IMPORTED FOR GHEE (CLARIFIED BUTTER) MAKING,  
DISSIMILAR TO LOCAL BUFFALOES INTRODUCED FROM TIMOR.





PEARLING LUGGERS, PORT DARWIN





A JAVANESE GIRL.



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Compiled by THOMAS GILL, L.S.O.,

TREASURY, ADELAIDE.

## APPENDIX.

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Transfer of Northern Territory to Commonwealth, Hon. F. W. Holder's Letter—Paper No. 27 of 1901.

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### **IMPERIAL PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS.**

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Port Darwin to Oodnadatta, Earl of Kintore, G.C.M.G.—Report on a Visit to Port Darwin, and upon the Affairs of the Northern Territory—H.O. paper, printed July, 1891.

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Exploration—Champion Bay to Overland Telegraph Line. By John Forrest, F.R.G.S. Perth: 1875.

DeGrey to Port Darwin. By Alex. Forrest, F.R.G.S. Perth: 1880.

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Geological Character of Country between Beagle Bay and Katherine Station. By Fenton Hill. Perth: 1880.

### **PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.**

Introduction of Japanese into the Northern Territory. Correspondence *re* Papers printed 11th and 20th September, 1901.

Staple Products, Minerals, and Financial Position of—Paper printed 12th July, 1901.

Pearl Shelling Industry, Port Darwin and Northern Territory—Report by His Honor Judge Daalwood, Government Resident, Palmerston. Paper printed 21st August, 1902.

### **ACTS OF PARLIAMENT RELATING TO THE SETTLEMENT AND DISPOSAL OF CROWN LANDS, &c. OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, PASSED BY THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT.**

An Act for regulating the sale or other disposal of Waste Lands of the Crown lately annexed to the Province of South Australia and for other purposes—No. 23 of 1863. Assented to November 12, 1863. Contains preamble and 17 Sections.

Note.—Sections 8, 9, 11, and part 14 were repealed by Act No. 28 of 1872. Sections 1 to 9 were repealed by Act No. 271 of 1882. Section 10 repealed and new Section substituted by Act No. 383 of 1886.

\* An Act to amend "The Northern Territory Act"—No. 3 of 1868. Assented to November 24, 1868.

\* An Act to amend an Act No. 3 of 1868, intitled "An Act to amend the Northern Territory Act"—No. 2 of 1869-70. Assented to February 9, 1870.

\* An Act to amend "The Northern Territory Amendment Act, 1868"—No. 3 of 1871. Assented to October 26, 1871.

\* An Act to regulate the sale and other disposal of the Waste Lands of the Crown in that portion of the Province of South Australia commonly styled the Northern Territory—No. 28 of 1872. Assented to November 30, 1872. This Act also deals with mining, fishing, etc.

\* An Act to provide for the publication in the Northern Territory of certain matters and things required by law to be published in the "Government Gazette"—No. 5 of 1874. Assented to November 6, 1874.

\* An Act to amend "The Northern Territory Land Act, 1872"—No. 48 of 1876. Assented to October 27, 1876.

\* An Act to provide for the Payment of Compensation to certain Selectors of sections of Land, in the Northern Territory, of deficient area, and for other purposes—No. 71 of 1877. Assented to December 21, 1877.

\* An Act to further amend "The Northern Territory Land Act, 1872"—No. 158 of 1879. Assented to October 25, 1879.

\* An Act to reduce the Rental of Lands leased for pastoral purposes in the Northern Territory—No. 179 of 1880. Assented to October 25, 1880.

\* An Act to encourage the settlement of that part of the Province of South Australia known as the Northern Territory, and to provide for the cultivation of sugarcane and other tropical products therein—No. 194 of 1880. Assented to October 28, 1880.

\* An Act to amend "The Northern Territory Land Amendment Act of 1876," and for other purposes—No. 220 of 1881. Assented to November 18, 1881.

\* An Act to amend Act No. 194 of 1880—No. 224 of 1881. Assented to November 18, 1881.

Note.—All the foregoing Acts marked with an asterisk were repealed by Act No. 271 of 1882.

An Act to consolidate the Acts to regulate the Sale and other disposal of the Waste Lands of the Crown in that portion of the Province of South Australia commonly styled the Northern Territory—No. 271 of 1882. Assented to November 17, 1882.

Note.—This Act was repealed by Act. No. 501 of 1890.

An Act to amend "The Northern Territory Act, 1863," and "The Northern Territory Customs Act, 1882"—No. 383 of 1886. Assented to November 17, 1886.

An Act to repeal "The Northern Territory Crown Lands Consolidation Act, 1882," and to make other provisions in lieu thereof—No. 501 of 1890. Assented to December 23, 1890.

Note.—Sections 59 to 76 repealed by Act No. 722 of 1899.

An Act relating to the Mining and Pastoral occupation of the Northern Territory—No. 649 of 1896. Assented to September 2, 1896. [Provides for Leases for encouraging establishment of Horse-breeding Stations.]

Note.—Section 5 repealed by Act No. 722 of 1899.

An Act to amend the Northern Territory Land Laws—No. 722 of 1899. Assented to November 22, 1899.

An Act to amend "The Northern Territory Land Act, 1899"—No. 771. Assented to December 21, 1901.

An Act to regulate the Export of and Traffic in Pearls and Mother-of-pearl Shell in the Northern Territory of the State of South Australia—No. 768. Assented to December 21, 1901.

An Act to provide for the Cultivation of Cotton and other Tropical Products in the Northern Territory—No. 874. Assented to November 24, 1904.

#### ACTS RELATING TO RAILWAYS.

An Act to provide for the formation of a Line of Railway from Palmerston to Pine Creek—No. 284 of 1883-4. Assented to October 26, 1883.

An Act to provide for the construction of a Line of Railway from Oodnadatta, in the State of South Australia, to Pine Creek, in the Northern Territory, and for other purposes—No. 808 of 1902. Assented to November 13, 1902. [Provides for construction by grants of land in fee simple in blocks situated alternately on either side of the railway.]

#### ACTS RELATING TO GOLD MINING.

An Act to regulate the Sale and other Disposal of the Waste Lands of the Crown in that portion of the Province of South Australia commonly styled the Northern Territory—No. 28 of 1872. Assented to November 30, 1872.

Note.—Sections 44 to 56 and 72 and 73 repealed by Section 4 of Act. No. 18 of 1873.

An Act to amend the Laws relating to Mining for Gold in the Northern Territory, and for other purposes—No. 18 of 1873. Assented to December 18, 1873.

An Act to amend "The Goldmining Act No. 353 of 1885," so far as relate to New Goldfields—No. 368 of 1886. Assented to September 3, 1886. Incorporated with Act No. 353 of 1885, intituled "An Act to amend the Laws relating to Gold Mining, and for other purposes."

Note.—Sections 1 and 7 repealed by Act No. 628 of 1895.

An Act to amend "The Northern Territory Gold Mining Act, 1873," "The Gold Mining Act Amendment Act, 1886," and for other purposes—No. 628 of 1895. Assented to December 20, 1895.

An Act relating to the Mining and Pastoral Occupation of the Northern Territory—No. 649 of 1896. Assented to September 2, 1896.

An Act to amend "The Northern Territory Gold Mining Act, 1873," and "The Northern Territory Gold Mining Amendment Act, 1895"—No. 695 of 1898-9. Assented to December 23, 1898.

An Act to provide for the Issue of Leases for Dredging for Gold in the Northern Territory—No. 720 of 1899. Assented to September 20, 1899.

An Act to Amend and Consolidate the Laws relating to Mining for Gold and Minerals in the Northern Territory—No. 839. Assented to October 30, 1903.

Private Act.—An Act to authorize the Northern Territories Mining and Smelting Coy., Ltd., to construct, &c., a Tramway from Iron Blow to near Mount Ellison, &c. Assented to November 24, 1904.

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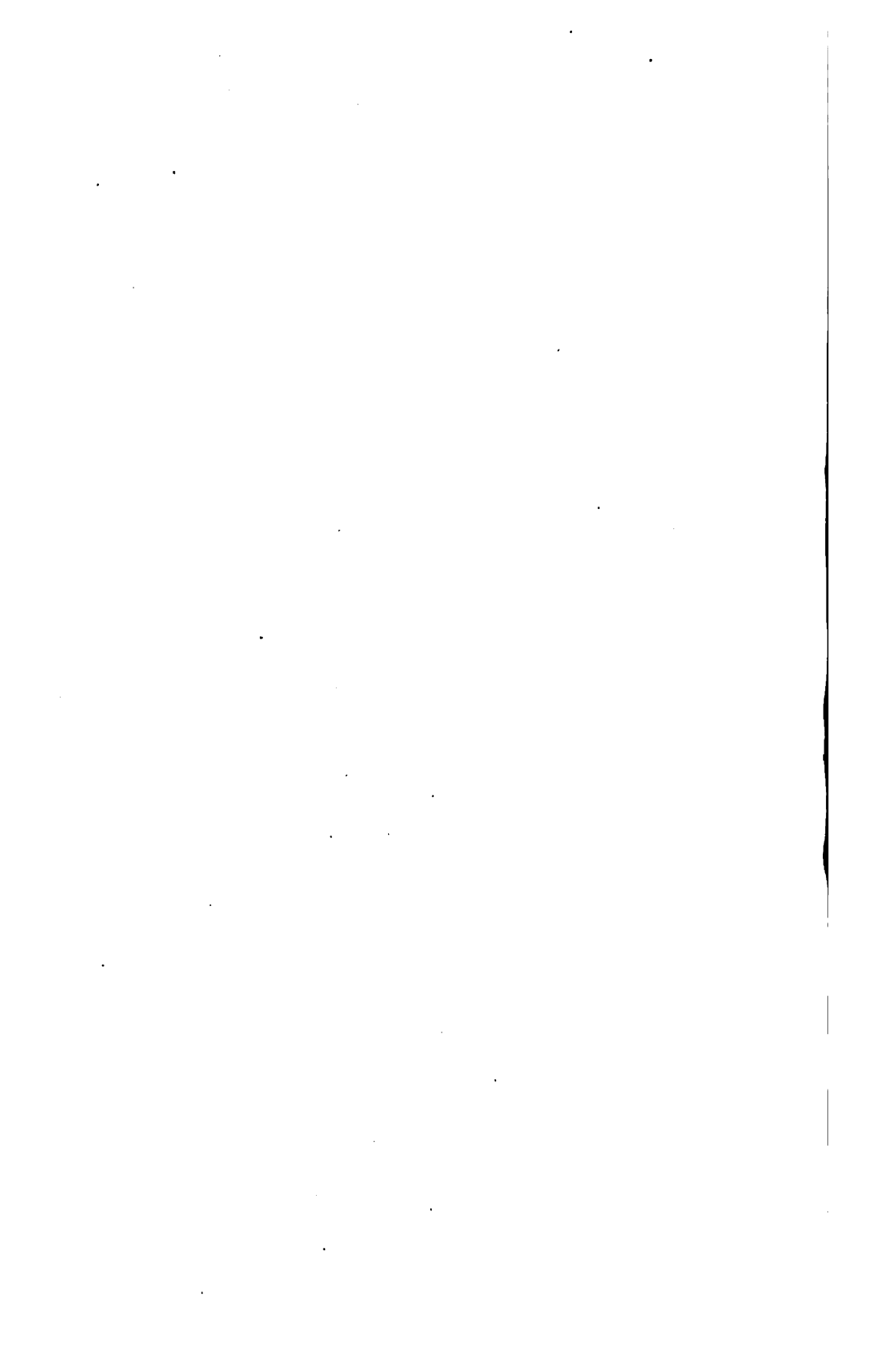
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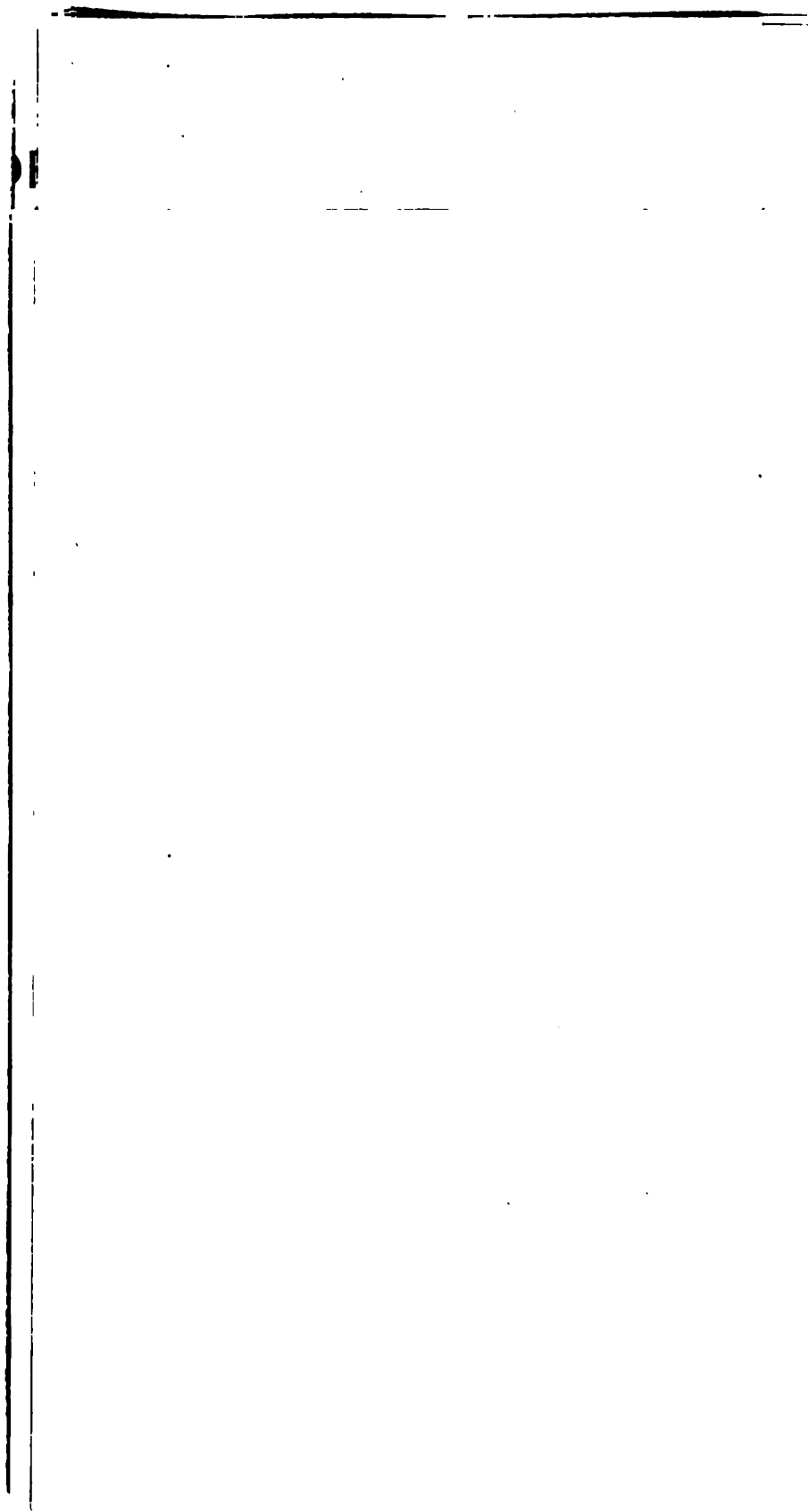
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